

S. Hrg. 106-432

GUIDELINES FOR THE RELOCATION, CLOSING, CONSOLIDATION OR CONSTRUCTION OF POST OFFICES

HEARING

BEFORE THE
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, PROLIFERATION, AND
FEDERAL SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 7, 1999

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GUIDELINES FOR THE RELOCATION, CLOSING, CONSOLIDATION OR CONSTRUCTION OF POST OFFICES

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1999

U.S. SENATE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,
PROLIFERATION AND FEDERAL SERVICES
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 p.m. in room 608, Senate Dirksen Building, Hon. Thad Cochran (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Cochran, Akaka, and Stevens

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COCHRAN

Senator COCHRAN. The Subcommittee will please come to order.

Today our Subcommittee meets to conduct a hearing on the subject of relocation, closing, consolidation or construction of post offices. We had promised Senators Baucus and Jeffords we would have a hearing that would also consider legislation they had introduced, S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999.¹ They will appear and be our first witnesses.

We have another panel of witnesses, including Howard Foust, who is President of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, Retired; Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Hon. Edward J. Derwinski, who is Legislative Consultant to the National League of Postmasters; and Rudolph Umscheid, Vice President of Facilities for the U.S. Postal Service, who is accompanied by Fred Hintenach, Manager, Retail Operations Support, U.S. Postal Services.

We are pleased to have here the distinguished Senator from Hawaii, Ranking Member of our Subcommittee, and the former Chairman of this Subcommittee for many years, Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska. I will be happy to yield to Senators for any comments or opening statements they might have at this point.

Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Nothing right now, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Senator Stevens.

¹ Copy of the bill, S. 556, appears in the Appendix on page 88.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR STEVENS

Senator STEVENS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Akaka. I am pleased you are holding these hearings, and I hope it will give us a chance to review the proposals that are before us. I ask that my statement appear in the record in full, if that can be done.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Senator Stevens follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR STEVENS

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that we are holding hearings on the issue of post office closing and relocation. The last time this issue arose it was offered as an amendment to the FY99 Treasury, Postal and General Government Appropriations Bill in July 1998. As you will recall, the provision was later removed in conference. I voted to table the amendment when it was offered on the floor and I am still concerned about the impact that the measure would have on the operations of the Postal Service.

The proposal in the House, H.R. 670, and the proposed Senate bill, S. 556, would dramatically impair the ability of the Postal Service to expand and renovate postal facilities across the United States. In my State alone the Postal Service has identified and scheduled 32 facilities for replacement. According to a September Postal Service memo, all but one of the proposed Alaska facilities has been approved for funding, and of the 32 facilities slated for construction, 29 have identified sites in each of the communities. In all of the communities, sites were selected with the input and agreement of community leaders. I have some examples of how the Postal Service has sought to accommodate the desires of local communities:

Bethel—A division in the opinions of local community members led the Postal Service to arrange several community meetings, including meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, the City Council and the Senior Citizens Group. In this case, the Postal Service is still working with the community to finalize the site selection process;

Akiachak—The Postal Service signed a lease on an existing building, the design for the building was completed and solicitation for the construction was finalized. The village then decided they would rather have the building put to another use. The Postal Service agreed to cancel the lease on the building and is currently looking at an alternate site for the Post Office;

Tununak—The Postal Service is currently working on the fourth site recommended by the community because of ownership and flooding problems with the first three sites.

In addition to meeting with community leaders on each of the site selections, the Postal Service must go through several agency reviews to make certain that they are in compliance with all of the local, regional and State requirements. In Alaska, the Postal Service meets with: the State Department of Environmental Conservation for an Alaska Coastal Zone Management review; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for wetlands designations and permits to construct in wetlands; the State Historical Preservation Office; the State Fire Marshall and local municipal offices, in addition to having local archaeological investigations and reviews. Trying to organize these meetings and reviews is complicated by the fact that our construction season in Alaska is only 4 months long. If the Postal Service is not able to proceed in a timely manner, projects could get pushed back an entire year.

The language of S. 556 does not take into account the short construction season in Alaska. S. 556 provides "any person served by the Post Office" 30 days to offer alternatives for relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction. The bill then would provide the Postal Rate Commission an additional 120 days to make a determination on the relocation, closing, consolidation or construction. That means a construction of a Post Office can be delayed at a minimum by 150 days, or 5 months, from the beginning of the process to the end. After all the conversations with community leaders and legislative bodies, a single person served by a Post Office in Alaska could halt the construction or relocation of a new facility during the shortened construction season, costing the Postal Service and the residents of that community another year in getting a new or improved Post Office.

The proposed legislation also requires the Postal Service to "respond to all of the alternative proposals" of individuals served by the Post Office in a single report. With approximately 40,000 Post Offices nationwide, requiring the Postal Service to

respond to all alternative proposals could dramatically impede the Postal Service's effort to operate an efficient mail delivery system.

There are stories of past efforts by the Postal Service to close or refurbish facilities against the wishes of the local community. However, I am advised that the Postal Service has adopted regulations to fix the problems. The community relations regulations published in May 1999 contain provisions stating that it is the policy of the Postal Service to comply with local planning and zoning requirements and to have community involvement in the decision making process.

In some cases, the Postal Service may have acted in a manner that some individuals did not appreciate. However, legislation that dramatically slows the Postal Service's ability to expand and maintain its operations may be heavy-handed in light of recent internal policy and regulatory changes. Remember, the Postal Service is not an entity supported by taxpayers—it is supported by rate payers. If Congress wants to reinstitute the oppressive interferences with postal operations that existed before the Postal Reform Act of 1970, this bill is a good place to start. It's costly, inefficient, and allows one or more people to dictate to a national entity that rate payers support.

S. 556 starts from the premise that further regulation of the Postal Service is required. That is a false premise.

Senator STEVENS. The proposal that is before the House, House bill, H.R. 670, and the Senate bill, S. 556, would dramatically impair the ability of Postal Services to expand and renovate the postal facilities across the country, in my judgment. In my State alone, the Postal Service has identified and scheduled 32 facilities for replacement. According to a September postal memo from the Postal Service, that is, all but one of the proposed Alaska facilities has been approved for funding, and of the 32 facilities slated for construction, 29 have identified sites in each of the communities involved.

In all of the communities, sites were selected with the input and agreement of community leaders. I have some examples of how the Postal Service has sought to accommodate the desires of those local communities, and my statement goes in depth into the activities of the Postal Service in Bethel, Allakaket, and Tuntutuliak. In each one of these very remote areas, it is essential that the feelings of the local people be listened to and that they be sought out and that agreement is reached. Primarily because they know the circumstances, they know where the flooding is, they know where the paths the people take, the older people take.

And in each of the communities where the site selection took place, the Postal Service has gone through several different agencies to make sure they are in compliance with local, regional and State requirements. In Alaska, the Postal Service meets with the State Department of Environmental Conservation for the Alaska Coastal Zone Management Review, the U.S. Corps of Engineers for wetlands designations and the permits for construction in wetlands, the State historical preservation office, the State fire marshal and the local municipal offices, in addition to having local archaeological investigations review. And they meet with the tribal leaders in areas where there are native people.

Trying to organize these meetings and reviews is complicated by the fact that our construction season in Alaska is only 4 months long. If the Postal Service is not able to proceed in a timely manner, projects get pushed back an entire year.

The language of S. 556 does not take into account the short construction season in States like mine. It provides any person served by the Post Office 30 days to offer alternatives for relocation, clos-

ing, consolidation or construction. The bill then provides for the Postal Rate Commission 120 days to make a determination on the relocation, closing, consolidation or construction. That means a minimum delay of 150 days. Again, I say, in a State like ours, one-fifth the size of the United States, totally dependent upon climate for construction seasons, that is just too long.

I do believe that the requirement of this legislation that the Postal Service respond to all other alternative proposals of individuals served by the Post Office in a single report is just extremely burdensome. There are approximately 40,000 post offices nationwide. Requiring the Postal Service to respond to all alternative proposals could really impeded the Postal Service's operation of an efficient mail service.

There are other reasons that I state here in my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. But I want to say, I think we all know that at times, because of personalities and other circumstances, the Postal Service may act in a manner that some individuals in an area might disagree with. It is a difficult thing for them to deal with. The Postal Service, we have got to remember, is not an entity supported any longer by the taxpayers. It is supported by the ratepayers.

If Congress wants to reinstitute the oppressive interferences with postal operations that existed before the Postal Reform Act of 1970, this bill is a good place to start, in my opinion. It is costly, inefficient, allows one or more people to dictate to a national entity that the ratepayers support, contrary to the agreements with local people made after proper consultation.

I think that S. 556 starts from the premise that further regulation of the Postal Service is required by the Congress. To me, that is a false premise. Thank you very much.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Akaka.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for having this hearing. I also want to welcome our witnesses that will appear before this Subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, approximately seven million customers a day transact business at post offices. We expect timely delivery of the mail 6 days a week. And the Postal Service has not disappointed us. That is saying a lot about the Postal Service.

Given the regularity of delivery and the millions of daily post office visits, it is no wonder that we view our local post office as a cornerstone of our communities. Many small towns, like their larger counterparts, developed around a post office where the postmaster served as the town's only link to the Federal Government.

However, there are a number of small post offices where annual revenue is lower than annual operating costs, impacting overall revenue within the Postal Service. In order to protect small post offices, The Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 prohibited closing a small facility solely for operating at a deficit.

I hope today's hearing will shed light on how decisions are made to close a post office, what guidelines the Service must follow in carrying out the determination, and what rights communities have

in the decision making process. I am interested to learn how S. 556 will assist downtown post offices, preserve the historical buildings and what differences there are between that bill and the year-old regulations issued by the Postal Service.

As the Service meets the challenges of the 21st Century, it must not lose sight of the needs of all its communities. The Postal Service should be proud of its accomplishments, including its new 94 percent delivery record. However, we must not forget small town America, which has given so much to our country. I look forward to hearing from our panelists, who I hope will assist us in finding a balanced and fair resolution to these issues.

Senator Levin is testifying before the Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Chairman, this afternoon, and may not be able to join us.

I also ask that my full statement be made a part of the record as well as a resolution by the National League of Cities in support of S. 556.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Senator Akaka and the referenced resolution follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA

I am pleased that we are holding today's hearing in order to provide our colleagues, the senior Senators from Montana and Vermont, the Postal Service, and other interested parties an opportunity to discuss S. 556, the Post Office and Community Partnership Act of 1999. We are all familiar with the legislative history of this bill, which is nearly identical to an amendment included in the Senate's fiscal year 1999 Treasury/Postal Appropriations bill. That amendment, like S. 556, would establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, or consolidation of post offices. Although the amendment was not included in the final appropriations legislation, there was overwhelming support for its inclusion.

The Postal Service estimates that seven million customers a day transact business at post offices. Moreover, we expect timely delivery of the mail 6 days a week—and the Postal Service does not disappoint us. Given the regularity of mail delivery and the number of Americans visiting post offices daily, it is no wonder that we have come to view our local post office as a touchstone of our community. Like their larger counterparts, many small towns developed around a post office where the postmaster served as the town's only link to the Federal Government.

Throughout the country, there are a number of small post offices where annual postal revenue is lower than annual operating costs. This imbalance impacts overall revenue within the Postal Service. However, in order to protect small post offices, the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 prohibited closing a small facility solely for operating at a deficit. Congress further amended the Act in 1976 by placing a temporary moratorium on additional closings and prohibited closing facilities serving 35 or more families. Although the moratorium was temporary, the amendments established specific guidelines by which the Postal Service must review the impact a closing would have on a community, the employees of the facility, and economic savings realized from a closure. Added to these guidelines are the new 1998 regulations, which we will discuss today that establish procedures by which the Service notifies local citizens and public officials of facilities projects and solicits and considers community concerns before making final decision relating to expansion, relocation, or new construction.

It is my hope that today's hearing will shed light on how the Postal Service decides to close a post office, what guidelines the Service must follow in carrying out that determination, and what rights do communities have in the decision-making process. I will also want to review how contract stations are impacted by these regulations.

I am interested to learn how S. 556 would assist downtown post offices and preserve historical buildings and what differences there are between that bill and the year-old regulations issued by the Postal Service. I am pleased that we have with us today in addition to Senator Baucus and Senator Jeffords, the president of the National Association of Postmasters, Postmasters Retired, the president of the Na-

tional Trust for Historic Preservation, and my former colleague Congressman Derwinski, representing the National League of Postmasters.

As the Postal Service meets the challenges of the 21st Century, it must not lose sight of the its responsibility to the needs of all customers—especially those living in small towns and rural communities. The Postal Service should be proud of its accomplishments, but I do not want the Service to forget small town America that has given so much to our country. I look forward to working with you all to find a fair resolution to the issues we will discuss today.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE “POST
OFFICE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999”

WHEREAS, the United States Postal Service (USPS) is not required to abide by local zoning codes; and

WHEREAS, the USPS is not always required to consult with a community regarding public concerns about any proposals to renovate, relocate, close or consolidate its physical facilities; and

WHEREAS, post office closings and relocations are occurring in several small and rural communities across the United States without valuable input and comments from the residents of those communities; and

WHEREAS, this disregard of community laws and values can result in the physical decline of an area within a community, as well as increase community economic and social costs both directly and indirectly; and

WHEREAS, post offices which remain located in downtowns can be critical elements in the restoration, revitalization and continued vibrancy of these areas; and

WHEREAS, downtown communities must have the opportunity to influence their futures, and must have the necessary input into USPS decisions that affect their communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National League of Cities supports congressional action on the *Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999*, which would require the U.S. Postal Service to cooperate with local governments when planning to restore, replace, close or relocate a postal facility.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National League of Cities supports the goals of this legislation, which include: (1) allowing communities the opportunity to offer alternatives to Postal Service plans to restore, replace, close or relocate postal facilities; (2) creating an atmosphere of cooperation between communities and the Postal Service to enhance the best interests of all involved in these decisions; and (3) strengthening the federal-local ties of the Postal Service and helping to preserve the downtowns of this Nation’s communities.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much.

Let me welcome our distinguished colleagues, Senator Baucus and Senator Jeffords. We appreciate your being here and serving as our lead-off panel for this hearing. The Senators are authors of legislation which is the subject of today’s hearing, S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999.

We appreciate your being here, and ask you to please proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JAMES M. JEFFORDS,¹ A U.S. SENATOR
FROM THE STATE OF VERMONT**

Senator JEFFORDS. Mr. Chairman, first let me begin by thanking you for agreeing to this hearing. We appreciated it when you

¹The prepared statement of Senator Jeffords with additional statements submitted for the record appears in the Appendix on page 35.

agreed to hold the hearing and appreciate it even more now that we are here.

I also appreciate your Subcommittee's interest in the subject, and look forward to listening to the witnesses.

There is much talk in the news today about revitalizing our downtowns and encouraging smart growth. Local post offices are important tenants in any vibrant downtown. A recent article in *USA Today* cited a 1993 study that found 80 percent of people who shopped downtown planned their trip around a visit to the post office.

About 2 years ago, there was an obvious increase in construction activity on the part of the Postal Service in Vermont. Decisions were being made by officials that were having profound effects on Vermont's villages and downtowns, with little or no input from the people living in those communities as to whether what the Postal Service was planning to do was a good idea.

In response to this activity, and similar stories from around the country, Senator Baucus and I began examining this issue. S. 556, the Post Office and Community Partnership Act of 1999, is a result of our efforts, and the input of postmasters and historic preservationists and many other local officials. Our bill would enable communities to have a say when the Postal Service decides that their local post office will be closed, relocated, or consolidated.

Members of the Subcommittee may ask why legislation is necessary. A few years ago, the General Store on the Green at Perkinsville, Vermont, went bankrupt, and the adjacent post office wanted to leave the small village center for a new building outside of town. By the time the community was aware of the relocation, plans were so far along that there was no time to fully investigate alternatives. In fairness to the Postal Service, since the issuance of their new rules in 1998, they have worked very closely with a number of Vermont communities on postal location issues.

What I think the Postal Service has learned in Vermont is the one-size-fits-all approach to community needs just doesn't work. While Vermonters recognize that the Postal Service has to be convenient, safe and efficient, the building and site standards of the Postal Service are sometimes at odds with the goal of strengthening downtowns. Specifications for ceiling heights, flooring materials, loading docks, parking spaces and so on have all been standardized. The standard model prescribed by the Postal Service is essentially a "suburban" model.

The easiest way to meet the specifications is to build a new building. These specifications are often very difficult or impossible to meet either in existing buildings or newly constructed facilities within Vermont's villages and downtowns. For example, in one Vermont community, the Postal Service is proposing to rehabilitate an historic building and construct a large addition. An admirable idea. But the preliminary site plan also shows the demolition of a number of the neighboring buildings in order to create the parking truck access required by the Postal Service's specifications.

Although the Postal Service has followed its new community notification process in Vermont, and it has kept State officials and legislators up to date on current projects, it is still critical that the

process be enacted into Federal law and an appeals process, which is not currently in the Postal Service rules, be mandated.

Mr. Chairman, I hope to work with you to enact S. 556 or similar legislation, which will require the Postal Service to abide by local zoning laws, Federal rules for historic preservation and the wishes of local communities concerning the relocation, closing, consolidation of construction of new post offices.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for giving me this opportunity to share my views with the Subcommittee. I ask that my full statement be made a part of the record.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Thank you, Senator Jeffords.

Senator JEFFORDS. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Senator Baucus.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MAX BAUCUS,¹ A U.S. SENATOR FROM
THE STATE OF MONTANA**

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I ask that my full statement be included in the record, and I will be brief.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, so ordered.

Senator BAUCUS. Mr. Chairman, this is a no-brainer. All we are saying is that whenever the Postal Service wants to build, remodel, reconstruct a post office, that at least the local folks have a chance to say what the remodeling, what the reconstruction, and where the replacement might be. That is purely and simply what this is.

And I stumbled across this, Mr. Chairman, because in my State, and I think this is true in a lot of other States, what I described is just not the case. That is, as Senator Jeffords mentioned, it seems that the Postal Service kind of has its cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all, particularly in small towns, the Postal Service, in their interest of efficiency, says, well, there's a downtown post office, maybe it needs renovation, whatever, let's close it, and we'll build a new modern facility on the outskirts, on the edge of town, outside of town.

And without consulting people of their plans, they just, lo and behold—after property is purchased and maybe construction begun—the local folks start hearing about it after the fact. Then it is usually too late, and they have to create a big fuss, a big storm in order to have themselves heard.

These are people who obviously want to have efficient delivery of mail. We all do. They just like the downtown post office, because it is a community center, it's a community hub. It's part of the culture of their communities. They are not averse to remodeling it or maybe relocating the post office in a way that makes sense both to the community spirit and for the efficiency of the Postal Services. It's just that they don't like, correctly, being stiffed, being just told, this is the way it is, lock, stock and barrel.

I can give you an example. In Livingston, Montana, we were having this problem. The Postal Service was going to close down the downtown post office, an historic building, it's a wonderful old building, lots of culture and feel and great architectural history to it. The people just didn't want it closed. That's where lots of people

¹ The prepared statement of Senator Baucus appears in the Appendix on page 50.

gathered in downtown Livingston, go to the post office, and check their mail. It's like the old commons in New England days.

But the post office said, no, we're just going to close it down, and we're going to build a new post office on the edge of town, which is very hard, nobody can walk to it, very few could, it was efficient because then the postal trucks could come in and out.

Well, I just happened to be in Livingston 1 day and was talking to various people. And it dawned on me, gee, Max, why don't you go over to the post office and just find out what this big controversy is all about. Just because it's part of your job, to figure these things out.

I walked over to the post office, in a very congenial, friendly way, and asked if I could look inside the post office, back behind the boxes, to see what it's like and how decrepit it is or isn't, and just get a sense of things. "Oh, no, you can't come in. You can't come in our post office," I was told.

I said, "Well, I just want to look, that's all." "No, you can't come in." So I said very politely, in a very friendly way, "Gee, I'd like to see inside the post office." He said, "Well, we're going to have to check with our headquarters."

So for 45 minutes I stood outside the post office, and people started to gather, "Max, what's going on here." The press started to come. I said, "I'm just trying to walk inside and see what the post office is all about."

Well, finally, 45 minutes later, I got the word that I could walk in, with only one staff person, we could go inside the post office. I said, "Well, OK, I designate so and so to be my staff person." It was a local reporter. So we went in and looked around. It was no big deal. We saw the loading docks, it was a little bit crowded.

The long and the short of it is that the community and the Postal Service reached an accommodation where some of the postal services were moved to a new location.

But this is just one example in my State. There are many other examples in my State. One is Red Lodge, Montana. Same thing. Lo and behold, the folks find that the property was purchased by the Postal Service at the edge of town to build a new post office. Well, that raised a big stink about it, and finally were able to put the kibosh on that one.

Another example is in Whitefish, Montana, and Augusta, Montana. I have a letter I can read to you, Mr. Chairman, which basically is a business person in Augusta, Montana, saying the downtown has just changed, it's not what it was, because they moved the post office away from downtown, built a new one on the edge of town. And they didn't have to do that, they didn't tell us in advance. We didn't know anything about it until it was done.

So I just want to emphasize the main point that the Senator from Alaska made. People should be involved in the determination of remodeling and location of their post offices. They shouldn't have the final say, they shouldn't have the total say, and they don't want the final say or the total say. They just want to be considered, to be able to have significant say in the future of their downtown.

Now, we all know that sometimes there is tax policy which adversely affects downtown America. Sometimes it's other actions that affect downtown America. Well, we certainly shouldn't have a

Postal Service adversely affecting downtown America. Because a lot of communities, as you well know, Mr. Chairman, are fighting to keep their local business district, their shopping centers there. And I am not saying that the local business district should always win as opposed to the mall people. I am just saying that the community itself ought to have a say in what the determination is.

We brought this bill up, Mr. Chairman, on the Treasury Postal Service, post office appropriations bill. And on a tabling motion, the tabling motion to delete this provision, lost 21 to 76. There is strong, overwhelming support for this provision. It is therefore in the conference, but the conferees took it out, against the wishes of two-thirds, three-quarters, virtually, of members of the Senate.

There may be some ways to work with this bill, tweak it a little bit here and there, and Senator Stevens raised a point about delay. We are more than willing to work with the Subcommittee to try to find a way to deal with his concerns.

But the main point I make is, it's a no-brainer. Local folks should have the ability to have a legitimate say in their downtowns. And certainly a local post office is part of that. The relocation or remodeling of a post office is part of that determination.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator Akaka, do you have any questions of these witnesses?

Senator AKAKA. No.

Senator COCHRAN. Let me thank you for suggesting that the hearing be held. At the time we agreed to have the hearing, we decided we would make the subject of the hearing not only the legislation which you have introduced, but the guidelines that have been promulgated by the Postal Service. Last year the Postal Service began to implement new regulations on this subject. Today we have a panel of witnesses to explain those regulations, how they are being followed, and what the effect of this legislation would be on the regulations and the communities where post offices are located.

We appreciate your input and your presence here. Thank you very much.

Senator BAUCUS. If I might, Mr. Chairman, I think I can speak for my good friend from Vermont here and say that the regulations, it's good to have regulations, but they can always be changed. I just think that people have a right by law to have some reasonable say. Not total, not absolute, not unnecessarily delay the process, but by law, have the right to determine reasonably their downtowns.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much.

Senator BAUCUS. Thank you.

Senator JEFFORDS. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. If our panel of witnesses that I announced at the beginning of the hearing would please come forward, we will start with Howard Foust, who is President of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, Retired. Then we will hear from Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Then the Hon. Edward J. Derwinski, who is Legislative Consultant to the National League of Postmasters. And then Rudolph Umscheid, Vice President of Facilities for the U.S. Postal Service. He is accompanied by Fred Hintenach, Manager, Retail Operations Support, U.S. Postal Services.

Welcome, and we ask you, Mr. Foust, to please proceed.

TESTIMONY OF HOWARD FOUST,¹ PRESIDENT, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS OF THE UNITED STATES, RETIRED

Mr. FOUST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Akaka. I appreciate being here today.

I am Howard Foust, President of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, Postmasters Retired, NAPUS. Prior to retiring, I served as postmaster of Plain City, Ohio, for 28 years. NAPUS represents more than 43,000 active and retired postmasters throughout the Nation. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our views regarding postal closures.

Furthermore, postmasters want to thank you for highlighting S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act. The measures introduced by Senator Baucus and Senator Jeffords would help to address a serious threat to the future of small and rural communities throughout the United States. It is important to recall that last year, the Senate passed by voice vote a provision similar to S. 556.

Mr. Chairman, while postmasters recognize that demographic changes often necessitate operational modification for certain communities, NAPUS opposes the arbitrary, closing, consolidating and suspension of post offices. To investigate the soundness of such action, NAPUS created the Committee for the Preservation of a Historic Universal Postal Service. It is a delegation composed of knowledgeable retired postmasters.

The committee monitors the action of the Postal Service managers to make sure that the proper procedures are followed regarding post office closings, including suspension and consolidation. At the conclusion of its investigation, the group reports its findings to the NAPUS national office and shares the results with the Postal Service.

While this unofficial procedure is helpful, NAPUS believes that the most effective way to curtail unwarranted suspensions is through enactment of S. 556. Mr. Chairman, approximately 500 post offices are presently under temporary emergency suspension. Two hundred and twenty of these post offices have been temporarily suspended for more than 5 years. That does not sound like temporary to me.

NAPUS believes that the Postal Service has no intention of ever reopening most of these facilities. Citizens and businesses and local officials of the communities affected by suspension have concluded that the Postal Service has elected to circumvent the Postal Reorganization Act procedure for closing a post office by using the suspension ploy. The Postal Service should have followed the Postal Reorganization Act stipulated procedure regarding closures.

I would like to focus on a provision of S. 556 that would help to safeguard postal services throughout the Nation by putting the brake on misuse of suspensions. That is, section 2(b)(12) of the bill would ensure that if a post office is closed, it is closed for the right reason, and that proper procedures are followed. In sum, S. 556

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Foust, with a list of closed or suspended post offices, appears in the Appendix on page 52.

would prevent the Postal Service from misusing the right to suspend postal services, limit such action to real emergencies and guarantee that such actions are temporary.

Let me explain what is supposed to occur when the Postal Service must temporarily suspend a postal operation at a particular office. The Postal Service must first declare that an emergency exists and that it is a threat to the health and welfare and safety of postal employees or customers or security of the mail. Such situations include natural disasters or lease termination.

Then the district manager is required to notify the postal headquarters of the suspension and must notify customers of the reason of the suspension, as well as an alternative location to receive postal services. Within 6 months, the district manager must decide whether to reopen the post office or begin a study to decide whether to permanently close it.

However, postal regulations do not establish a time limit for the completion of such a study. As a consequence, the Postal Service may institute a temporary suspension of postal service without a time limit. S. 556 helps to protect small communities from the misguided decisions by postal officials from initiating so-called temporary emergency suspension of post office operations. By limiting the temporary suspension to 180 days, this would help guarantee that the temporary suspensions are truly temporary, and are a result of an emergency situation.

As I stated earlier, the current law provides a specific procedure through the Postal Rate Commission should the Postal Service decide to close a specific post office. Yet no such procedure is required to invoke a temporary emergency suspension. As a result, the Postal Service has found that it is much easier to suspend an office rather than close it. S. 556 helps to remedy the misuse of Postal Service suspension power.

The expiration of a post office lease and the retirement of a local postmaster is a predictable event. Six months is enough time to locate a suitable site to replace the former one. Furthermore, the decision of the Postal Service to disregard the maintenance of older post offices and leaving the physical plant in disrepair should not be misused as a basis for suspension.

In rural and suburban communities around the Nation, postmasters serve a vital link between the Federal Government and citizens and small businesses. The suspension of full service postal operations disrupts the vital link and interferes with the communication and commerce within these much overlooked areas of the country.

In conclusion, a 1997 General Accounting Office report established that post offices under emergency temporary suspension affect customers in much the same way as post offices that are officially closed, and that the service from those offices are also no longer available. NAPUS believes that the law should reorganize these back.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a list of all the offices that have been closed back from 1982, and I would like to submit them for part of the record, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much for that information. We will make that list a part of the record. We appreciate your

being here. I know you were postmaster of Plain City, Ohio in 1966, when you were appointed. You have served as an officer in your association for a good number of years. And we appreciate your being here.

Mr. FOUST. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Moe is representing the National Trust for Historic Preservation. I know you have a fairly lengthy statement, and I would encourage you to make summary comments from that. We will print the entire statement in the record. We are glad you are here. It is good to see you. You may proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF RICHARD MOE,¹ PRESIDENT, NATIONAL
TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Mr. MOE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you very much for holding this hearing on this very important issue.

Let me just say that we at the National Trust have a very high regard for the Postal Service for many reasons. Among them, they are the stewards of more than 850 historic structures. They have more historic structures in their inventory than any other Federal entity, except the Interior Department. And for the most part, they are very good stewards of those structures.

This is a complicated issue. I don't think there is a simple solution to it. But I would like to comment on several aspects of it. I would like to make two very simple points, Mr. Chairman. One, the importance of downtowns to communities and the role that post offices play in strengthening downtowns, and two, the distinction that's been made at the Postal Service between closings and relocations. Because I think that really gets to the heart of this matter.

The National Trust has been involved in trying to sustain the viability of downtowns for a long time through our Main Street Program, which you may be familiar with. Over 20 years, we have been involved in 1,500 communities all over the country, working with businessmen and businesswomen to strengthen the viability and the economic strength of downtowns.

We have learned a lot about downtowns in that process, what makes them work and what hurts them. One of the things that really is essential to a strong and viable downtown, we've found, is a post office. Because a post office is more than just a simple economic facility. It is also a social gathering place in many cases, it's the glue that holds a community together. Small businessmen rely on it very heavily.

Senator Jeffords made a reference to a study we did in Iowa a few years ago, which did show that 80 percent of the people coming downtown did so in large part to visit the post office. It's really a magnet that brings people to the downtown and that holds people together.

So we feel very strongly that downtowns cannot survive, first of all, communities cannot survive without strong downtowns, and downtowns cannot survive without a post office. It is unlike any other institution or entity that you will find in a downtown. It plays a unique role in every community.

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Moe appears in the Appendix on page 64.

I think that is manifested by the very large number of calls and letters that you are getting and that we are getting and that really brought this issue to the fore.

When a post office leaves the downtown, economic deterioration almost inevitably follows. In many cases, you can mark the beginning of the deterioration of a downtown from the time that the post office closed and left.

Let me just comment briefly, if I may, on the distinction that's been made in the practice of the Postal Service between closings and relocations. The 1976 Act deals with closings and consolidations, and I think does so in a pretty thoughtful way. There are procedures and safeguards and consultative requirements built into that 1976 Act that I think have worked pretty well for the most part. But that only applies to instances in which post offices are being closed.

The Postal Service chosen not to apply those same procedures and safeguards to instances where they want to relocate the post office from the downtown to an outlying area, even though the impact on the downtown is the same—the post office is gone. My very simple point here is that the safeguards and procedures that are now applied to closings should be applied at least to relocations, because they have the same devastating impact on downtown. And as the two Senators mentioned, the community has a huge stake in these decisions. And the community ought to have a chance to participate in these decisions.

It was only after this issue became public and after there were a number of articles printed on it and television stories broadcast that the Postal Service started to address it. It was only after the legislation, S. 556, was introduced in the last Congress that the Postal Service issued guidelines and promulgated regulations. That's a step in the right direction, and I commend them for it.

But it doesn't go anywhere near as far as it should. And it doesn't go as far as the Congress went in 1976 in dealing with the closings. We would strongly urge that you take steps to remedy the gap that now exists in the law between closings and relocations.

What happens here is that the Postal Service often makes these decisions about relocations in private. And even now, under the new regulations, they only give the community 7 days to react, it is my understanding. A very short period of time, but it's a fait accompli. It's very hard for communities, many of whom want to offer free land or offer whatever help they can to keep the post offices downtown, to do so in that constrained time period.

So I would again urge that you take a look at this and try to use the framework of the legislation that's been introduced and which is supported, I should say, by the National Association of Governors, by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and by the U.S. League of Cities, virtually everybody who is focused on the viability of communities which are suffering from a lot of threats these days to try to keep communities strong. Everybody who's looked at it knows that the role of a post office is essential.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you, Mr. Moe. We appreciate your testimony.

Our next witness is the Hon. Edward Derwinski. I am pleased to be able to welcome my friend Ed Derwinski to the Subcommittee. When I was elected to Congress in 1972, he was serving as a member of Congress from Illinois, and was a prominent member of the committee that had jurisdiction over the Postal Service and the workings of the delivery of the mail. I came to know him and appreciate him and respect him from the beginning. He has continued to do well in public life, serving as a member of the Cabinet, as Secretary of Veterans Affairs. We appreciate your taking time to come be with us today. Welcome.

TESTIMONY OF HON. EDWARD J. DERWINSKI,¹ LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POSTMASTERS

Mr. DERWINSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a very brief statement which I would ask to be inserted into the record on the position of the National League of Postmasters.

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, it will be.

Mr. DERWINSKI. I might add, Mr. Chairman, that I remember when you and Senator Akaka arrived in the House of Representatives as youngsters. I have witnessed in both cases a remarkable career you've had. You can imagine the feeling of awe I have appearing before you this afternoon. [Laughter.]

I will be brief and just make one or two points. First, the National League of Postmasters supports the efforts of the Postal Service to solve these problems within their current jurisdiction and regulations. We believe that they can do it. We believe that, as the gentleman to my right noted, that they became much more concerned with this problem when this legislation was introduced. I think it is possible for Senator Baucus and Congressman Blumenauer in the House to take the same position that Senator Aiken took at the time during the Vietnam War, when he suggested to President Johnson that we just declare that we had won and we're coming home.

By making the Post Office more aware of the concern of the Congress because of questions raised by constituents in communities, the Post Office has responded. And we in the National League of Postmasters want to cooperate with their positive efforts. Mr. Umscheid has a very impressive testimony for you, and I would highly commend it to you.

We're always concerned, representing as we do the postmasters, that consolidations and closings reach the heart of the Postal Service. Their mission is to serve every American, universal mail service. That's a dedication, and that's a dedication that's shown, I believe, in the adjustments they have properly made.

I would also point out, Mr. Chairman, I have to again admit my age, but prior to you and Senator Akaka arriving in the House, we passed the monumental Postal Reform Act of 1969, the basic law was known at the time as the Udall-Derwinski amendment. Our late colleague, Mo Udall, and I sponsored that bill.

The basic intent of that bill was to remove the dead hand of politics from the Postal Service. We did so, I think, effectively. Thirty

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Derwinski appears in the Appendix on page 70.

years later, that is still the case. But the dead hand of politics I refer to included direct involvement of the Congress in site selection and post office locations. I think as a young Congressman, here you are, you have a new community, they are building, they want a new post office, you are pleased to help. Then you get caught in a battle between two aldermen and the board, both of whom happen to be realtors and both happen to have different locations. It was a lose-lose situation.

The same at that point, if you also would recall, postmasters were appointed by Congressmen. You had a dozen or so applicants. You made one friend when you finally made your choice, and a dozen enemies. A lose-lose situation.

And we recognized at the time, Postmaster General Blunt was the man that took the bull by the horns and said, let's get out of politics. I'll leave the Cabinet and let the Post Office serve the public in the best administrative manner possible, without this unfortunate interference, this historic interference from Congress. In fact, at the time, postal workers led the drive for the periodic wage increases of Federal employees. Congress subsequently set up the procedure where now cost of living figures are used to give the annual pay adjustments. Much better system than we had when it was politicized.

So I have to tell you quite honestly, when I look at this bill, I think it starts that dangerous road down to eventual Congressional involvement in site selection of postal facilities. And that was really abused. It was a terrible system. That's why I would recommend that we congratulate Senator Baucus and Congressman Blumenauer, they have achieved their purposes, they have scared the living bejesus out of the Postal Service. [Laughter.]

Mr. DERWINSKI. Mr. Umscheid has lost his hair. [Laughter.]

He is the responsible officer. And I think that they should keep their Post Office feet to the fire, hold this bill ready and if they are unhappy with the services rendered by the Post Office, they can come and present it to you. But I think they've won the battle. And in winning the battle, they make it unnecessary to tamper with the very effective U.S. Postal Service that our citizens enjoy.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Derwinski, for your always enjoyable presentations, no matter what the subject. You are certainly a person who has the experience and the credentials to speak on this subject.

As you were talking about the challenge of naming postmasters, I recalled what former Congressman John Bell Williams, who was a predecessor, he had the seat in Congress that I held, told me. He said it was one of the best pieces of legislation that he remembered the Congress passing. Because his experience had been that of the 12 candidates for postmaster, you would get 11 enemies and 1 ingrate. So he changed it a little bit from what you said. [Laughter.]

Rudolph Umscheid is Vice President of Facilities, U.S. Postal Service. You may proceed.

**TESTIMONY OF RUDOLPH K. UMSCHIED,¹ VICE PRESIDENT,
FACILITIES, U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, ACCOMPANIED BY FRED
HINTENACH, MANAGER, RETAIL OPERATIONS SUPPORT, U.S.
POSTAL SERVICES**

Mr. UMSCHIED. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee. I clearly recognize that this is an extremely important issue. It's important to the Postal Service, it's important to its employees. It's particularly important to the employees who have to live and work in our infrastructure. I know that it is also extremely important to the citizens of this great country.

While I understand the concerns that gave rise to the proposed legislation, I would like to share with the Subcommittee why the Postal Service feels that it will be detrimental to the Postal Service and to the communities we serve and will greatly curtail our ability to provide the necessary infrastructure.

The Postal Service is one of the Nation's largest owners and managers of real estate, with over 37,000 buildings containing 310 million square feet of space. Our facilities handle 630 million pieces of mail every day. Mail volume has doubled in 20 years. In fact, for the first time in history, we will handle over 200 billion pieces of mail this year.

This volume growth, coupled with the population growth, strains the capacity of our facilities. Even in areas of little or no growth, we must address issues relating to deteriorating conditions from decades of use, as well as the need to upgrade offices when employee safety and accessibility and other problems are identified.

In an attempt to keep pace with this need, we have an annual construction budget of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion, which is a significant investment in the communities throughout the Nation. We complete more than 20,000 repair and alteration projects, conclude some 8,000 lease transactions and deliver some 800 new or replacement facilities each year. The Postal Service recognizes the pivotal role our postal facilities play in towns and cities across the country, and we understand why our customers feel that their local post office is an integral part of their community.

We are very sensitive to these concerns and want to ensure that those served by a postal facility have input into the decisions that could affect their community.

We believe that we have improved our performance in this area during the past 2 years. First, with the revised policy in 1997 and then with formal regulations, which were published in the *Federal Register* and took effect in 1998. Do we have a perfect record? No, we do not. I think as Senator Baucus pointed out, Livingston was clearly a black eye in the process. But unfortunately, it occurred.

But I think our record overall is a good one, one that is better than the isolated press clippings or anecdotal stories might indicate.

Our regulations require that we meet with local officials and hold a public meeting at the start of our process before any decision has been made. We explain how our process works, including the time

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Umscheid, with a list of closed or suspended post offices, appears in the Appendix on page 72.

frame of comments, decisions and appeals, using the community regulations handbook during discussions. With our local officials there is a convenient brochure which discusses our partnering concept to hand out at all public hearings, so that our customers understand how they can participate.

Our first priority is to remain in existing locations. In fact, since September 1997, we have completed over 200 projects in which we have either expanded the existing post office or moved the carrier operation to another location, thus keeping the retail in its existing location. We have 250 similar projects in progress, and over 150 are in the initial planning phase.

If it is not feasible to expand an existing facility, our second alternative is to remain in the same vicinity. If no buildings or sites are available, only then will we seek alternatives that may be out of the downtown area. We also keep this community informed at every step of the process, and anyone not satisfied with the process can appeal to me.

In the years since these regulations have been in effect, I have received fewer than 30 appeals. I get personally involved in these cases, and take my responsibilities very seriously. I believe I understand the balance of serving our community yet trying to preserve our operational capabilities.

Some involve a disappointed owner of a site not selected. Some involve a wide difference in opinion within the community as to the best location. Even with our preference for keeping the facilities in or near their existing locations, there are some members of the community who simply want the post office to be near their homes where they shop on a daily basis, so that they can combine trips.

In several appeals, I have been able to work with the local community to find a suitable solution acceptable to everybody. Such solutions are not easy, nor are they fast. In one particular situation, working with the mayor of Ashboro, North Carolina, we eventually were able to identify and assemble a site consisting of eight separate parcels. In brief, we successfully partnered with the community to achieve the right solution.

And in sum, I have upheld the original decision the Postal Service had made as being the right decision, because nothing else would resolve the facility problem. There are instances where we have worked for 20 years to find a site, and have yet to implement a badly needed facility.

We also are working on a number of efforts to improve how we work with the communities and how we can remain in the downtown area. We have developed a training program for our real estate specialists, only 105 across the entire country, to improve their skills at public meetings. We want to be better listeners, provide complete information, answer questions in a forthright manner, engage the citizens in a positive manner. We have prepared and issued samples of all notices and correspondence relating to this process, so that our real estate professionals follow the policy.

In an effort to improve the likelihood that we can find alternative space in the general vicinity of existing offices, we have relaxed our requirements for parking in downtown areas. We can sometimes reduce our interior space requirements in those communities that we are not expected to experience high growth. We work with the

communities on those exterior designs of the facility, so that it blends in with the character of the community and with the State historic preservation office suggestions. And when we renovate or expand older facilities, there is no such thing as a cookie cutter design. My office also follows up on press clippings that may indicate that there is a problem or controversy brewing.

With that background, I'd like to turn to the proposed legislation. While it is well intended in that it certainly emphasizes input from those served by a postal facility, we believe that it does not serve the public or our employees.

First, in S. 556, post office relocation or new construction, which are replacements of the existing office, are treated in the same manner as a post office closing or consolidations, where there will be a postal facility in a zip code area. The very deliberate and lengthy process used when we consider closing a postal facility takes on average 2 years from the time we begin the process until a final decision is made. And sometimes longer if the Postal Rate Commission sends it back for additional data.

The legislation proposes a process for a relocation or new construction that would take up to 18 months or longer for a decision before a site could even be purchased or any construction could begin. This is unacceptable when we are unable to continue leasing the current facility or when an existing facility is in poor condition, which can pose serious safety concerns to our employees and customers.

It also poses a problem when a severe space shortage exists, which can cause safety and other service problems or prevent the installation of modern equipment. In addition, it is unlikely that we will be able to control a proposed site for a relocated post office or new construction for that period of time. Thus, even after gaining approval, we might have to start all over again to try and find a new site.

Second, we do not feel that it is prudent to legislate processes requiring judgment decisions. In many cases, we deal with communities that cannot reach a consensus on where a facility should be located. The legislation requires that consideration be given to the community input, but does not allow us to go with the majority input.

The legislation states that all reasonable alternatives must be fully evaluated, yet reasonable means different things to different people. In effect, the legislation is simply inviting controversy and a lengthy review, not by the communities served, but by the Postal Rate Commission.

Third, our regulations provide for more input and discussions with the community, and it takes place at the start of the process. Conversely, the legislation proposes that we get public comments after we announce our decision and hold a community meeting only if asked. This does not foster the partnership we are trying to create.

Fourth, anyone can appeal our decision to the Postal Rate Commission, even competitors who reside in the community. It does not matter if local officials in 99.9 percent of the community endorse our decision, an appeal can go forward, delaying a much-needed

project for an extended period. In brief, the process will lend itself to abuse.

Fifth, over the past decade, we have modified our community relations policies, strengthening the requirements each time, but also making changes as we gained experience and saw what worked best, providing notification cards to all customers or holding community meetings, deciding when to hold a public hearing, establishing a period of time between actions in the process and providing appeal rights. A legislative process will not allow these types of evolving improvements to be easily incorporated into our procedures.

Finally, the bill would require the Postal Service to comply with all local zoning and building codes. In the past year or so, we have increased our efforts to work with local zoning boards and city offices. We now voluntarily comply with zoning with few isolated exceptions.

In addition, we have a longstanding requirement to construct our facilities to the more stringent of local and national codes. However, some building codes, such as those requiring public bathrooms in public lobbies, fire sprinklers and handicapped accessibility to our inspection service lookout galleries, pose undue hardships to the Postal Service. In fact, some code requirements could increase our space needs, such as added parking, to an extent that we could not locate in a downtown area. We need the flexibility to resolve issues with the local community.

In summary, we have made great strides in working with these communities on our facility decisions, and I believe our recent record is a very positive one, with few exceptions. The proposed legislation will cause us undue delays, resolving facility issues which add costs to the process, significant costs, I might add. In addition, it will delay projects to such an extent that we will not be able to make the same level of investments in these facilities each year.

This in turn will affect the communities and hundreds of small businesses that perform hundreds of millions of dollars of construction work for us. It will also allow safety problems to linger.

The Postal Service feels very strongly, and I cannot emphasize this enough, that the legislation would have a devastating impact on our ability to provide much-needed facilities to everyone we serve, everywhere, every day, at a reasonable price.

This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for your patience.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Umscheid, for your testimony and also for your explanation of the new regulations that have been implemented by the Postal Service.

I have a copy of what appears to be a second edition. Is this the latest edition issued May 1999?¹

Mr. UMSCHIED. Yes, sir, it is.

Senator COCHRAN. And the first was issued back in October, I believe, of 1998?

Mr. UMSCHIED. Yes, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. The impact of these regulations must have by now been assessed by you and your office. How would you rate the

¹ The latest version of the amendment of the bill appears in the Appendix on page 97.

regulations in terms of improving community relations for the U.S. Postal Service? Has this had any noticeable impact on how the relationships are now defined between the Postal Service and local towns and cities?

Mr. UMSCHIED. Absolutely, from my direct participation, this has significantly enhanced our ability to communicate and allow the citizens of a community to participate in the decision-making process. I have been involved in projects all over the country, have gone to small-town America and participated with the mayors.

Yes, it has taken us more time. It used to be that on average it would take us 6 to 8 months to identify sites in communities to acquire for new facilities. Now it takes longer, possibly 2 or 3 months longer. But at the end of the process, we feel that we have generally secured a consensus. Not always. Sometimes we simply have to walk away and say, there isn't a solution, and we can't force feed a solution. We need to move on, because we need new facilities.

Senator COCHRAN. What about the suggestion that some have made that you have a tendency now to close the downtown post offices and buy property out on the outskirts of town? Is this commonplace, or is there an effort by the Postal Service to preserve downtown facilities where you can? I know there's an executive order that applies to other Federal agencies which states that when appropriate and prudent, you should consider locating facilities in downtown or historic districts before considering other locations.

Mr. UMSCHIED. As I had mentioned, it is our first priority to locate a facility downtown. We are very sensitive to the issues of trying to preserve historic buildings, whether it be our new postal museum in Georgetown or investing \$30 million in the main post office in the Bronx. It is absolutely essential that we remain downtown.

Now, again, sometimes we encounter great difficulty in trying to find the appropriate site. Sometimes we are willing to pay premiums to secure the downtown location. In other instances, when those premiums get to be three and four times the fair market value of the property, we have to defer a decision. But contrary to what might have been the preference of our operating folks who would prefer a location more accessible to highways and transportation, the emphasis today is to remain downtown.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Moe, I know that the emphasis in your organization is to preserve historic properties. Do you think these regulations provide some new opportunities for meaningful community input and input from organizations such as yours into decisions about the location and relocation of post offices?

Mr. MOE. Mr. Chairman, I think they are definitely a step in the right direction. And I was very pleased to hear Mr. Umscheid outline the priorities of the Postal Service in this area.

The problem is that the regulations are applied very unevenly across the board. Maybe that's because they're new. In many cases, it's the first instinct of the Postal Service to leave the downtown and not to look for an alternative site or even to look to see whether a remodeling or an addition would work.

We have a very recent example of this in the town of Demopolis, Alabama, which you may be familiar with, a town of about 7,500, a very historic town. They have a 1912 post office, a

beautiful building. The Postal Service announced in early September that they were going to move outside of town, close the post office and build a new facility on U.S. 80. They held a hearing. Hundreds of people turned out at the hearing, over 1,000 people signed a petition. The town of Demopoulous is absolutely united that they should keep the postal facility downtown. And they are now eagerly awaiting the decision of the Postal Service on that question.

But it is a very short time frame. There was almost no time for the community to react and to come up with alternative suggestions. That's the problem with the regulations.

As I said earlier, what I think is needed here is a process at least as good as that which the Congress provided in the 1976 Act for closings. That process should be applied also to relocations, in my view.

Senator COCHRAN. I notice that in our notes here it says the National Historic Preservation Act requires Federal agencies to consider the impact of actions on structures included in the National Register. Does this apply to the Postal Service?

Mr. MOE. Unfortunately it does not. And under S. 556, it would. And we think it should, for the very same reason that the Congress determined that it should apply to other Federal facilities.

Senator COCHRAN. Have you had any experience working with the Postal Service in terms of assessing the impact of public comment such as the one you described in Demopoulous? That has not yet been decided, as I understand.

Mr. MOE. That has not yet been decided as far as I know.

Senator COCHRAN. Do you know of any other instances where you've had people come to a public meeting under these regulations and where they've had an impact on a decision by the Postal Service?

Mr. MOE. Yes, and I think it's been a very mixed record, very uneven. The example that Senator Baucus referred to in Livingston, Montana, several years ago, I think that was resolved by leaving the retail facility downtown and moving the distribution and sorting facility outside of town, which is sometimes an appropriate decision. There's not a one-size-fits-all solution to these things. It depends upon the community, obviously.

But I think in many instances, the Postal Service has tried to be accommodating to local concerns. But they don't have the tools to do it, and they don't really have the guidance to do it fully yet.

Senator COCHRAN. My understanding, too, is that there is a difference in the law, Mr. Umscheid, between closing a post office and relocating or expanding a post office. Is it true that under the new regulations, local customers who want to be heard on the subject of an expansion or relocation can appeal to your office, to postal headquarters in Washington? If there is a closing, however, under law, there's a right to appeal to the Postal Rate Commission?

Mr. UMSCHIED. That is correct. The closing is a very protracted process requiring many operational considerations and impact on the community. Mr. Hintenach, who is our manager of retail and who ultimately has the responsibility for that, can better articulate how that is dealt with very differently from what I do on the implementation of replacement facilities.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Hintenach, would you like to respond and explain the differences between a relocation and a closing? How do you determine which is which?

Mr. HINTENACH. The regulations are very specific, and I think as Mr. Umscheid mentioned in his remarks, that a post office closing—we are not leaving service, we are still providing service to the community. But we no longer have a physical presence. It's a much different situation.

And the law was enacted, I believe it was in 1976, that provided a series of events that started with a study, community meetings, posting to the community that a decision has been made to close the post office, then certain appeal rights to the Postal Rate Commission. Quite frankly, I think that's a very good process for that purpose, because that is when the Postal Service is looking at no longer having a physical presence in the community. It takes a very long time, and if you look at some of the GAO studies that were done in 1997, it took about 4 years average to review, which was too long, and we've cut that back to about 2 years.

I'd also like to add at this point that in March 1998, we placed a moratorium on post office closings. That was a result of a number of things, and I'd just like to give you a real quick history here. In 1992, we started to have a very large number of retirements of small postmasters. It was a time when early benefits were offered if people retired, and we had a lot of retirements.

We started to computerize our systems at the same time, and also found that we had a large number of offices that had not followed the process. And we started to implement that. And as a result, we had a number of closings; the number actually jumped up significantly. We started to clean those up and they started to jump even a little more. Then when GAO did their study in 1997, which said we were doing a very good job of following the process, but in fact we weren't being timely enough. That's when it was taking quite a bit of time to go through these.

Thus we picked up the pace again and the numbers went up further. And all of a sudden, everybody was saying, boy, look, we're closing a large number of post offices in this country. Believe me, the post offices are very important to us, we have a wonderful group of postmasters who do an excellent job of serving the community. We stood back, we were starting to get questions from this legislative side of the House, we were getting questions from our postmaster organizations, and the Postmaster General decided, let's put a moratorium on.

As recently as this morning, we met with the postmaster organizations and agreed that we were very confident we could come up with a process, and even looked at improving the involvement of the postmaster organizations in looking at post office closings. So we are taking this very seriously on the impact on the community and the impact of the service provided and on our postmasters. But it's a much different process, I believe, when you leave a community physically than if you relocate or want to do a remodeling.

Senator COCHRAN. We just came across the other day in our office a situation where a Mississippi delta post office that we thought had been closed had actually not been closed. It had been put under what was called an emergency suspension. I had never

heard of that, because I'm not an expert. I am learning a little bit more about these terms now.

But we found out that it's been under emergency suspension since November 1996. And a suspicion arises, that this is classified in a way that prevents, in effect, anybody from appealing to the Postal Rate Commission? If you closed it, you would have had to go through this step by step procedure under law. But if you just suspend its operation on the basis of an emergency or call it that, you don't have to go through that.

Who's to know whether it's really been closed or is really just suspended?

Mr. HINTENACH. Well, the process is such that, an emergency suspension you should not have existing for years and years and years. And we found some of that, and that was one of the things in the mid-1990's that we started to clean up. The 1996 emergency suspension you are probably talking about is now being looked at, in regard to the post office moratorium, we are taking a look at that to see the validity.

But the key thing is, there is a process by law that we must follow and we will follow it in every case. Even if we missed one from 1982, we will go back and follow that process to make sure we follow the process of the law. An emergency suspension occurs while we are doing the study, and the study can often take 18, 24, or 36 months, depending on community involvement, the discussions you have, the alternatives you look at, and possible appeal to the Postal Rate Commission.

Senator COCHRAN. Just for the record, I hope you will supply for us, for the hearing record, how many post offices are currently in emergency suspension status and how many have been in this status for more than a year.

Mr. HINTENACH. I would be glad to provide that. In fact, that's the same list that Mr. Foust is referring to,¹ because we have shared it with them. So we will get you that.

Senator COCHRAN. OK, thank you very much. Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Foust, you have a proud background with the Postal Service. You proudly served the Village of Plain City, Ohio, as its postmaster for three decades.

In your experience as a small town postmaster, would you share with us what it was like to serve a community with approximately 2,500 people?

Mr. FOUST. Yes, sir, I would be glad to. You serve with pride every day. Absolutely. You put that flag up and you take the flag down, you come in on Christmas morning and sort the packages out and call the people and say, hey, this looks like it might have a package for Christmas. Those are the kinds of things you do in a small community yet. See, I was born and raised there. I knew everybody.

That's maybe one of the things, we have that fault with the Postal Service now, we have people that live a good many miles away and they are not really involved in their community. But I sure was involved with my community, and I take exception to the fact

¹ List referred to appears in the Appendix on page 77.

that we may have taken out the politics, but we still may have politics, a little different kind of politics, maybe kind of cronyism, which is even worse. Before you know, if your gang was in, you were in, if you weren't, you were out. But now you don't know exactly who you are supposed to catering to.

I would like to elaborate a little bit if I could, talk about the meeting we had this morning. I really believe that this Blumenauer bill and this S. 556 has kind of got somebody's attention. Not ours. We sent a list back in May 1998 and the Postmasters Retired took this over, because we had the time to go to see these offices and knock on the doors and know the older postmasters that were there and get their input. And we did that, all over the country. We've got a committee of 10 retired postmasters that are all in the different areas of the Postal Service, and they've got people that report to them, that go out to these offices.

We got this list in 1994. Now all of a sudden, we're just now beginning to get something done. The reports were sent back in early July 1998, to get something done. It would just kind of stall.

My biggest problem, I think, with the whole procedure is over possibly 500 post offices on suspension, is there is a process in the Postal Reorganization Act that says what you will do with the thing. And it seemed to me like what they may be doing is if you just put it in temporary suspension, the people that are fussing with the Postal Service, if you wait long enough, they'll forget about it and then maybe we can go ahead and close it.

And that's not the way to do business. Just because we only have 2,500 people in Plain City doesn't mean we shouldn't have the same respect that Columbus, Ohio, does. And that's my comments, Senator. If that answers your question, maybe more than you wanted to know.

Senator AKAKA. I wanted to hear from a person like you, and you must know that what you just said will be included in the record. Certainly it will be helpful.

Mr. Foust, how does the Committee for the Preservation of an Historic Universal Postal Service function?

Mr. FOUST. It is a committee of retired postmasters of the International Association of Postmasters of the United States. And really, postmasters retired that still have post office in our blood. You just don't stop it today. I don't know why I'm still doing it. But things just aren't like they ought to be, and somebody has to stand up and say something. You have these meetings with communities, and most people won't say anything.

But the way we started this committee is so we could have people available to go out and inspect the facilities and see what is available or not available. And many times probably 80 percent of it we've said, these post offices probably ought to be closed, and sent that information to the Postal Service. But sometimes we find that if they wait long enough, people just forget about it, and maybe just close all of them.

Senator AKAKA. Was NAPUS involved in the drafting of new regulations, do you know?

Mr. FOUST. Well, they are working on it now. Like I said, this is what was in the meeting this morning, in trying to come up with some regulations. One of the things they were concerned about was

that the retired postmasters really shouldn't have any input. I really think we're citizens, at least we could tell them what we see. Possibly the postal employees don't have the time, and yet they are overlooked by somebody that's got a vested interest.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Derwinski, was your group involved in that?

Mr. DERWINSKI. Oh, yes, our president was there all morning. I think, Senator, if you'll let me make an oversimplified comment, naturally, you hear about all the defects of the Postal Service. You don't hear about the effectiveness day after day, the millions and millions of pieces of mail that are handled. The U.S. Postal Service, with all of its headaches and the arrows that it takes, is the finest example of postal service in the world. And we take the position at the National League of Postmasters that we're part of a team. And we want to improve it. We don't operate from an adversarial relationship, we operate from a positive teamwork relationship. And we have found the postal officials, when we break through their bureaucracy and their little clusters, they want to help.

Sometime a few months ago, there was a, I don't recall, maybe it was a Gallup poll, they took a poll that showed that the Federal entity with the highest rating of public approval was the U.S. Postal Service. And that's just a fact. But what you hear are the necessary gripes. You don't hear about the daily effectiveness.

Senator COCHRAN. Senator, we just have received word, we have a vote on the Floor, 4 minutes are remaining for us to record our vote, so we'd better go over there.

We have a couple more questions, if you wouldn't mind staying. We will be back in about 10 minutes. Thank you. We will stand in recess.

[Recess.]

Senator COCHRAN. The Subcommittee will please come to order.

When we recessed to go vote, Senator Akaka was engaged in asking questions of the panel. I think we shall continue with Senator Akaka's questions. Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to say that Senator Edwards wanted to come to this hearing, Mr. Chairman, to discuss a matter of importance to North Carolina. That was the closing of a remote coding center in Lumberton. He is concerned about the loss of jobs associated with the closing and the effect that this will have on the community.

Unfortunately, he is unable to attend this hearing, but the Postal Service can expect written follow-up questions to be posed by Senator Edwards.¹

I would also like to ask that a letter from Representative Blumenauer² supporting S. 556, the companion bill to his legislation, be included in the record, along with Senator Levin's statement.³

Senator COCHRAN. Without objection, that will be included in the record.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

¹ Questions and answers submitted by Senator Edwards appears in the Appendix on page 33.

² The letter from Representative Blumenauer is included with the Senator Jefford's prepared statement that appears in the Appendix on page 43.

³ The prepared statement of Senator Levin appears in the Appendix on page 105.

Mr. Umscheid, the regulations issued in 1998 providing community input into the decision making process are just that, regulations that may be changed at any time. How do we ensure that there is a permanent process in place without legislating these guarantees to the public?

Mr. UMSCHIED. Interesting question. I'm not so sure I quite know how do we guarantee that we will continue to adhere to the process. I think the best way is that we continue to be terribly responsive to public opinion. Clearly, as issues are in effect brought forward to you and to Congressional folks and to our attention, then we respond.

I think that clearly, the Postal Service has become a very customer-focused organization. And it certainly is not in our best interests to alienate anybody in the community, because they are our customers. And clearly, there are some delicate tradeoffs about trying to find the best location versus meeting our operating capabilities, our preferences.

I want to comment just briefly on the Demopolous, Alabama situation that Mr. Moe made reference to. I saw it in his prepared statement. I think that is the classic example wherein the anecdotal story is placing us in a very unfavorable light. We conducted a community process. And contrary to Mr. Moe's statement, there is no time limit. We are not obligated at the end of 7 days that we are going to immediately conduct a public meeting and make a decision.

A meeting was held there. There was no reference made that we would move outside of the downtown area. In fact, ultimately, I suspected a decision will be made that we will stay there and we will have a split operation. A split operation means that we will have the retail, full service capabilities in the downtown. We will simply relocate our carriers to a location out of the core district, obviously in a building that's a more industrial type building that allows for trucks and our delivery vehicles and our mail processing equipment.

Even when we adhere to a process, we have a situation, and I believe Mr. Moe's statements were very misleading. There will be controversy. And in many instances, if there is more than one meeting required, we hold those meetings. We want to reach a consensus to the very best of our ability.

Unfortunately, we have a few instances like this. Bear in mind, I ask you to consider, we are delivering 1,000 facilities. One or 10 or 20 or 30, yes, get to be very controversial. But it's still a very, very small percentage. And others, yes, they may be difficult. But any that are referred to either Congressional delegation or directly to my attention, the Postmaster General, believe me, when they go to the Postmaster General, I hear about them immediately, and I respond.

But I respond to all of them. They are terribly important. I was terribly concerned about Mr. Moe's statement that in fact we were deviating from the process. We are not.

Senator AKAKA. Since he talked about Alabama, let me talk about Hawaii. My State of Hawaii is served in some areas by contract service stations. Are customers notified when there is a

switch from full service to contract service, and if so, how is this carried out?

Mr. HINTENACH. Senator, let me try one little clarification here. There are contract stations and there are contract post offices. Often times a contract post office is put in to replace a post office that is no longer in the community. Contract stations, which is an internal term, are part of an existing post office. But in order to provide the community with better access, we might establish a contract station underneath an existing contract—and I'm not sure, Senator, which you have. You may have both.

Senator AKAKA. I think we have both. My question was, whether they were notified in case there is a switch in these services.

Mr. HINTENACH. The community, if we would substitute a community post office for a post office, the community is notified, because we have to follow the law and the procedures of the law to close a post office. It might be replaced with a community post office. We don't do very many of those.

Senator AKAKA. And is there a special way that you carry this out?

Mr. HINTENACH. We follow the same process of the post office closing, with doing a study. We determine the needs, we'll make a decision to eliminate the post office and we would tell the customers that their service is being replaced by a community post office, and they would also have appeal rights to the Postal Rate Commission.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Umscheid, Hurricane Floyd recently devastated parts of North Carolina, including many rural areas, much like Hurricane Iniki that occurred on the island of Kauai nearly 10 years ago now. What happens to post offices during a time of natural disaster?

Mr. UMSCHIED. We did lose several post offices. I think in certain instances we also had vehicles that were containing mail that were underwater. We do use modular units that we are able to ship in. We continue to find ways to deliver the mail, and I'm sure both of these gentlemen know this much better than I do, the unusual and extraordinary measures that they go through to continue to deliver the mail.

But we then go back in, as soon as conditions permit, and we replace them. If there is emergency funding, when the hurricane came through, even prior to it having passed through the area, we have already made provisions with contracting organizations who are prepared to go in at the earliest possible moment to replace what is absolutely necessary to get us back providing the service that's important. We don't close any as a result of that. It causes a terrible hardship on a lot of folks, but hopefully in the end, we even have a better facility.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Derwinski, your involvement in reshaping the Postal Service is well known. I know you've worked in the area of postal service while you were in the House as well. I think the modern Postal Service reflects, thinking about you, your commitment to take politics out of the mix.

I appreciated your comments today and heard your cautions. Given your support of the new regulations, would you add anything to these new rules?

Mr. DERWINSKI. Yes. I'm sure that further prodding by not just the postmaster groups but, for example, the unions, letter carriers, supervisors unions, all the interested employees as well as customer groups, could further convince the Postal Service to streamline, somewhat streamline and say, be a bit more consistent. I think they were a little reluctant to get where they are. But now that they're there, we're convinced they are going to do a much better job.

Call it proper the same function you serve when you maintain legislative oversight over any entity. We hope to have that kind of positive pressure and presence felt by the Postal Service.

Senator AKAKA. I always cherish your wisdom in many of these things. As I say, Ed, I look upon you as one that has really reshaped the Postal Service over these many years.

Mr. Moe, I appreciate your being here today, and I applaud the Trust for leading the way for over 50 years in helping to preserve our national heritage. In your testimony, you make a strong case for ensuring that downtown communities, many with historic buildings, be preserved. I can see from your testimony that the Postal Service has a key role in maintaining a town's vitality.

S. 556 would bring the Postal Service under local zoning laws. I know that you believe the Postal Service's exemption from local zoning and planning laws has harmed communities. Would you give us an example of this?

Mr. MOE. Senator Akaka, I don't have specific examples. But I was pleased to hear the Postal Service representatives say that they do comply with local zoning requirements in the vast majority of instances. I am not expert in this area, so I don't know the precise exceptions that they make.

But let me make another point, if I may. They made the distinction earlier between closings and relocations, and I understand the distinction they are making. But the impact on the historic resources that are left downtown when a post office leaves downtown is exactly the same. And it's usually devastating.

Mr. UMSCHIED. Senator, if I might, could I comment on the zoning issue?

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Umscheid.

Mr. UMSCHIED. I will give you an example where we did not comply with zoning, or the intent of the zoning. We had a situation where we were in a leased facility next to Lincoln Center in New York City. It's called Ansonia Station. It serves tens of thousands of people. We parlayed our leased interest in the building and sold it to a developer who built a new building, very expensive high-rise. Out of that, we had to move for an extended period of time, 4 or 5 years, while they were going through the process.

We moved out, and then we moved back in to a brand new facility that served our long-term needs. When the developer built the building, it was always understood clearly by everybody that we would move back. When it came time to move back and to put our facility in, certain neighbors in very expensive condominiums objected to our presence.

Now, I would say it was maybe less than prudent for the deputy mayor and other folks to say, we approve it from a zoning standpoint. They encouraged us that they would support us if we would

exert our Federal prerogative to proceed and say that we were exempt from zoning to go back. Because it was just for the expediency.

In my 5 years, I can tell you that there is—I can't think of another example where we have deviated from zoning. Bear in mind that most of our facilities are leased, of that 35,000 or so, 29,000 are leased, smaller post offices. And the owners of those leased facilities have to go through zoning.

Stonybrook, Long Island is a very controversial one. It's in a leased facility. The owner is going through the process to secure the zoning rights to expand the post office, then we still have a decision to make, because the community still would prefer to have us preserve the green area. So do we consider split operations?

Those are the kinds of dilemmas that we're sort of thrust in. Frankly, I would look for ways to get some wisdom to find solutions to those problems.

But zoning, from my perspective and my 5 years of experience, is not a problem.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Chairman, you have given me so much time. I have other questions, but I'll put them into the record.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I have a couple of items to raise that are related to facilities in my State that I want to bring to your attention. One has to do with the contract postal unit in a mall, called Metro Center Mall in Jackson, Mississippi. It is supervised by a post office, Westman Plaza Post Office, in Jackson. Some constituents called the office the other day complaining about the closing of the contract postal unit, although I don't know they knew what it was, it was just a post office facility.

We checked into the thing to find out what was going on, and learned that whoever had the contract had abandoned the contract or had ceased operation. The postal officials had not been able to find anybody else who wanted to do it, or who could carry out the responsibilities of that unit.

What applies there? It occurs to me this is something to raise here, because if we adopted this legislation, for example, what would you have to go through with a contract postal unit? Does that fit within the terms of S. 556? If not, how do your regulations apply to a contract postal facility? What do we tell the people down there who are disturbed about the fact that that post office is closed?

Mr. HINTENACH. I don't think that the bill applies to the contract postal units, the way I read the bill. Oftentimes what we do with a contract postal unit, we try to find someone immediately to take over that contract, especially if it's providing a lot of service to people. Sometimes you can't find an operator. The local postmaster or the local district will work to try to find somebody to the best of their ability to do that.

Most of the time we're successful, Senator. Because a lot of businesses like to have a contract postal unit, because it also helps them draw some traffic in while they are doing postal business. The process would be that for the customers to let the post office know that this is something they desperately need for their support.

Usually we find other operators. In this case, it sounds like there's been some difficulty. I'll be glad to look into that for you.

Senator COCHRAN. Yes. That would be great to know.

Also another example, at Mississippi State University, I'm told they are trying to develop a project which includes the construction of a new student union facility. They have two postal facilities on the university campus, I'm told. What they would like to do is combine them at the university in this one facility, an expanded post office facility to be located in the student union building.

The project obviously would be a very important and needed improvement on the university campus, and local postal officials are reviewing the proposal and exploring the options with the university.

I'm curious to know how your community regulations apply to this project? Are you involved in following the regulations here? If you don't know, would you check to be sure that they are followed?

Mr. HINTENACH. I'll be glad to look into it. Because it depends on the circumstances. We have contract locations on campuses, we have our own operations on campuses. In this case, it sounds like we have our own operation in some part of that campus.

And oftentimes what we find is the local university will work very closely with the local postal officials and find a solution. I will be glad to look into this for you, also, Senator.

Senator COCHRAN. It's called Mississippi State University. [Laughter.]

Mr. HINTENACH. Thank you. Alumnus?

Senator COCHRAN. No, but my grandfather was. I went to another university.

We've also had letters and statement submitted to the Subcommittee on the subject of today's hearing—a letter from Postmaster General William Henderson, a statement from Senator Richard Shelby, and a letter from Vincent Palladino, President of the National Association of Postal Supervisors.¹ Without objection, these comments will all be made a part of the record.

I am also aware that Senators Baucus and Jeffords may have additional materials to submit for the record, and that Senators who are Members of this Subcommittee may have statements or questions to submit for the hearing record. We hope that if questions are received, you will be able to respond to them within a reasonable time. And we will keep the record open for all statements and questions to be submitted, and the responses to questions for the record.

Let me thank all of you for being here today. This has been an excellent hearing, we've learned a lot. We appreciate your assistance in our effort to understand better the new regulations and the proposals for legislation on this subject.

The Subcommittee will stand in recess.

[Whereupon, at 4:40 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

¹A letter from Postmaster Henderson with attachments, prepared statement from Senator Shelby, and a letter from Vincent Palladino, submitted for the record appear in the Appendix on pages 100, 107, and 108, respectively.

A P P E N D I X

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR MR. UMSCHIED FROM SENATOR EDWARDS

Question 1: The USPS Remote Encoding Center (REC) in Lumberton, North Carolina is slated to close in July 2000. This means that 193 people in Lumberton will lose their jobs. The unemployment rate in Robeson County is more than double the average rate for the entire State. It is my understanding that Lumberton was selected to be a REC location partially because of the region's economic hardship. Why then was the Lumberton facility selected to close in one of the first couple of rounds? Please describe the specific factors that were considered by USPS in making this decision.

Answer: Lumberton was initially selected as a REC location in 1992 when RECs were operated by private contractors. When the Lumberton REC was converted to a Postal run operation in July 1995, the Postal Service decided that leaving the REC site in Lumberton was a good business decision and a good decision for the Lumberton community. In fact, it was decided to expand the operation from what existed during the contractor operated phase. The decision to close Lumberton in July 2000 was a business decision based on several factors. The Lumberton REC does not have the capacity to support absorbing workload from other RECs which is a prime consideration for selecting RECs to remain open. Further, the operating costs in Lumberton rank among the highest of all RECs in the country.

Question 2: Please describe the specific steps USPS took to inform the Lumberton community that the REC was temporary and could close at any time prior to the expiration of the 10 year lease.

Answer: The issue of the Lumberton REC being temporary in nature was discussed with the Lumberton community during negotiations for the building lease. As was the case in all other REC locations, discussions concerning lease negotiations were the first discussions with the local community regarding our intentions.

Question 3: Was an incentive package agreed to by USPS and local government officials to encourage construction of the REC in Lumberton? If so, what were the terms that were agreed to?

Answer: Yes, an incentive package was agreed upon between the Postal Service and the Community of Lumberton. Incentives offered from the city and county included \$350,000 to supplement the rental rate, \$30,000 for employees training, and a 10 percent reduction to the electricity usage for 24 months. It should be noted that incentives similar to those in Lumberton were negotiated in 24 other REC communities.

Question 4: I understand that 87 of the individuals who will be laid off as "career" Postal employees. Will USPS guarantee that they will be offered other positions within USPS? And if so, is it possible that the employees may have to relocate? I also understand that approximately 106 individuals are transitional employees. What steps will USPS take to help these employees obtain alternative employment?

Answer: The career employees at the Lumberton REC will be offered other positions in the Postal Service. It is likely that some of these career employees will have to relocate. The Postal Service will work closely with local employment agencies to assist the transitional employees in finding non Postal employment. The Postal Service will establish an Out-Placement Center at the REC to assist these employees.

Question 5: Has a decision been made to close other RECs within North Carolina? If so, when will these facilities be closed?

Answer: The Postal Service has announced the closing of 28 Remote Encoding Centers nationally. No other North Carolina sites are included in these 28.

Question 6: Is USPS planning on locating any other postal facilities in the Lumberton area?

Answer: At this time the Postal Service is not planning on locating any other Postal facilities in the Lumberton, NC area.

Question 7: Has USPS made any attempt to encourage other businesses to utilize the facility once USPS leaves?

Answer: Yes, the Postal Service is working with the local community leaders in Lumberton. We have agreed to leave a significant amount of office equipment on site in Lumberton as an enticement for other businesses to utilize the facility after we leave.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. JEFFORDS
BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, PROLIFERATION
AND FEDERAL SERVICES
OCTOBER 7, 1999**

Mr. Chairman. First, let me begin by thanking you for agreeing to hold a hearing on U.S. Postal Service location issues. I appreciate your committee's interest in this topic, and I look forward to reading the testimony of the witnesses.

There is much talk in the news today about revitalizing our downtowns and encouraging smart growth. Local post offices are important tenants in any vibrant downtown. A recent article in USA Today cited a 1993 study that found that 80 percent of people who shopped downtown planned their trip around a visit to the post office.

About two years ago there was an obvious increase in construction activity on the part of the Postal Service in Vermont. Many towns were finding that their post offices were being upgraded because they no longer met the needs of the Postal Service or its customers. Decisions were being made by officials that were having profound effects on Vermont villages and downtowns with little or no input from the people living in those communities. In response to this activity, and similar stories from around the country, Senator Baucus and I, together with Congressman Blumenauer, began examining this issue. S. 556, the "Post Office and Community Partnership Act of 1999", is the result of our efforts and the input of postmasters, historic preservationists, and many local officials.

Our bill would enable communities to have a say when the Postal Service decides that their local post office will be closed, relocated, or consolidated.

Members of the Committee may ask why this legislation is necessary. A story from my home state of Vermont will shed some light on the problem.

A few years ago the general store on the green in Perkinsville, Vermont went bankrupt and the adjacent post office wanted to leave the small village center for a new building outside of town. By the time the community was aware of the relocation, plans were so far along - the new building had actually been constructed based on the promise of the post office as the anchor tenant - that there was no time to fully investigate in-town alternatives. One elderly resident wrote that in contrast to families now being able to walk to the post office, "we certainly won't be walking along the busy Route 106 two miles or more to get our mail."

In fairness to the Postal Service, since the issuance of their new closing and consolidation guidelines in 1998, they have worked very closely with a number of Vermont communities on postal location issues.

What I think the Postal Service has learned in Vermont is that a one-size-fits-all approach to community needs doesn't work. While Vermonters recognize that the Postal Service has to provide convenience to its customers, efficiency in mail delivery, safety and a good working environment for its staff, it has become apparent in Vermont that the building and site standards established by the Postal Service for upgrading postal facilities are very specific and sometimes at odds with the goal of strengthening downtowns.

Specifications for ceiling heights, flooring materials, loading docks, parking spaces, and so on, have all been standardized. The standard model proscribed by the Postal Service is essentially a "suburban" model. The easiest way to meet the specifications is to build a new building. These specifications are often very difficult or impossible to meet either in existing buildings or in newly constructed facilities within Vermont's villages and downtowns.

For example, in one Vermont community the Postal Service is proposing to rehabilitate a National Register-eligible building and construct a large new addition. An admirable idea. But the preliminary site plan also shows the demolition of a number of neighboring buildings in order to create the parking truck access required by the Postal Service's building standards. Although the Postal Service should be commended for trying to keep the post office in the downtown, the parking requirements of this plan may create a large hole in the streetscape and alter the traditional pattern of compact development that defines this and other Vermont communities.

Although the Postal Service has followed its community notification process in Vermont and has kept state officials and legislators up to date on current projects, it is still critical that the process be enacted into federal law; and an appeal process, which is not currently in Postal Service rules, be mandated. Right now there is no recourse for decisions made by the Postal Service. Public notification, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and with local zoning and the appeal process, should be required by law, not by rules, which can be changed relatively easily, in order to ensure accountability on the part of Postal Service officials.

Mr. Chairman, I hope to work with you to enact S. 556 or similar legislation that will require the Postal Service to abide by local zoning laws, Federal rules for historic preservation, and the wishes of local communities concerning the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of new post offices.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to share my views on this important issue with the Committee, and I ask that my full statement, as well as a number of supporting statements and letters, be made part of the record.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES

10/1/99

Honorable Senators,

My name is Fred Dunn, and I am the Postmaster of Manchester, Vermont and the President of the Vermont Chapter of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States. I appreciate this opportunity to comment on S.556, The Post Office and Community Partnership Act of 1999.

I support this bill because it is conceived in the spirit that every American is important to our government, regardless of where they live. The Postal Service is huge, with over 800,000 employees and 60 billion dollars in revenue a year. We handle over 40% of the mail on Earth. The Postal Service has done a remarkable job of holding down rates while serving this enormous country. I am proud to be a part of that success.

I am also proud to serve as the Postmaster of a village Post Office that is the hub of this community. I know that scores of my customers would take an active interest in any plans the Postal Service would have to close, relocate, or significantly renovate "The Village P.O.". Postal regulations do now allow for input from the community, with appeal rights to Postal Executives, but Postal regulations can be modified to fit the needs of the Service.

S.556 keeps the Postal Service mindful of its place as answerable to the needs of its customers, every American. This amendment to Title 39 would create challenges to our executives, but they are adaptable and will find ways to meet the needs of the Postal Service's operations and still respect the rights, under this amendment, of each community, regardless of size.

Unreasonable appeals will be dismissed by the Rate Commission, so the Postal Service shouldn't fear this review by individuals outside of the hierarchy of our Service. The amount of additional time needed for appeals is not unreasonable, and temporary emergency relocations due to disasters are not delayed the way the bill is currently written.

I commend Senators Baucus and Jeffords for proposing S.556 and I thank this committee for listening to a village Postmaster.

Fred Dunn
President
VT Chapter NAPUS



Testimony of Deron Lovaas
Associate Representative of the Environmental Quality Program
at the Sierra Club
Before the House Committee on Governmental Affairs,
Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services
October 7, 1999
Regarding S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Deron Lovaas. I am an Associate Representative with the Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program. I am grateful that the Committee is holding this hearing concerning S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act. We support S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act, because it would give communities more choices, and would help prevent sprawling growth.

The Sierra Club is a national, grassroots environmental organization. We are the country's oldest environmental organization, with more than a half-million members who belong to more than 65 chapters and 450 groups.

At present, the U.S. Postal Service, a branch of the federal government, is exempt from local zoning and building laws, and can uproot and move its local offices at will, with little regard for the impact such decisions have on the communities served. When a branch of the Postal Service disregards local zoning standards, the federal government places itself above locally-created laws and regulations and ignores the wishes of the community. This is an especially uncomfortable position for a post office, because although it is a federal organization, local citizens use it every day, and it is an integral part of most communities.

Additionally, the zoning laws were created according to local priorities, and by ignoring those laws, the Post Office implicitly deems those priorities of marginal importance. The Postal Service need not consult with the community, or planners at the local and regional level when making location decisions. Many communities are attempting to carefully plan their future development, so as to protect and preserve their open spaces and maintain a high standard of living for themselves and their children. In order to help rather than hinder this healthy process, the law as it now stands must be changed. Communities must be allowed and encouraged by the federal government to plan their future growth, and post offices are a necessary part of that growth.

The Sierra Club takes the issue of sprawl and its well-established harmful effects on the environment very seriously. Our Board of Directors established sprawl as a national top priority campaign after polling our membership to find our chapters' most pressing concerns at the state and local levels. Our Challenge to Sprawl Campaign is high on our priorities list because of the alarming rate we are destroying cherished open spaces, and how that negatively affects people's lives. In particular, our prime farm land is being eaten up at the rate of almost 50 acres an hour by inefficient, low-density housing. The Sierra Club has just released its second annual report on sprawl, called, "Solving Sprawl," which has ranked each of the 50 states on their actions towards preventing sprawl. In this report, we find that sprawl is not inevitable, and that government has a role in managing growth more sensibly. Legislation like S. 556, The Post Office Community Partnership Act, are steps in the right direction. Concretely, the bill would help by mandating that the Post Office yield to local priorities, giving communities greater ability to plan and execute smarter growth strategies, to preserve open space, and to work towards a better environment for their children.

By requiring the Post Office to consider certain prescribed factors when deciding whether or not to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, communities gain more control over their futures, and the federal government is accountable and must listen to local interests and issues. Post offices under S. 556 would have to consider: 1) the extent to which the post office is part of a core downtown business area; 2) the adequacy of the existing facility and the cost-effectiveness of the move; 3) the potential effects of the change on both the community and the postal workers, and 4) whether or not the community served by the Post Office opposes the action. These common sense factors should be considered, and were being considered by post offices in many cases. But it is important that if and when the will of the Postal Service is arbitrary, and not in line with community interests, the federal government have a law in place to protect those communities. That protection is S. 556.

Sprawl, and its prevention and management, is a top issue on the minds of people across the country, Democrats and Republicans alike. Creating a livable, appealing environment is a non-partisan issue. We all want to live and work in vibrant communities, with protected green space, access to shops and entertainment, and good schools and services. This can happen if we plan our growth, which in much of the country is spreading rampantly and without bounds. The Sierra Club urges you to consider the issue of sprawl, an overwhelming concern for many Americans, and take legislative action in order to alleviate it.

The Post Office Community Partnership Act would require that the Postal Service respect the wishes of the community in which it is located or where it plans to locate. We need legislation now to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, integral parts of communities across the U.S. For these reasons, the Sierra Club urges you to pass S. 556.

Thank you.

* National Association of Counties * National League of Cities *
 * National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers *
 * The U.S. Conference of Mayors * National Trust for Historic Preservation *
 * American Planning Association * Preservation Action *
 * International Downtown Association *
 * National Alliance of Preservation Commissions *

October 5, 1999

The Honorable Thad Cochran
 Chairman
 Committee on Governmental Affairs
 Subcommittee on International Security,
 Proliferation and Federal Services
 Hart Senate Office Building, Room 442
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Governmental Affairs
 Subcommittee on International Security,
 Proliferation and Federal Services
 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 326
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Gentlemen:

We appreciate your willingness to hold a hearing on S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act and request that our letter be included as a part of the official record. Our groups include a broad spectrum of local government and preservation interests that frequently interact with the United States Postal Service. We hope that our experience will help convince you, and your counterparts in the U.S. House of Representatives, that Swift passage of S. 556 and H.R. 670 is necessary to assure our communities have a voice in the post office construction decisions which impact them.

The United States Postal Service is the most visible Federal institution in America. Indeed, in many towns, the local post office is the only Federal building. Because of the unique presence of post offices, many citizens equate their treatment at the hands of the Postal Service with their relationship with the Federal Government in general.

But the Postal Service is more than just a symbol. The daily visits to the post office that customers make have shaped the development of our towns. Business districts form around post offices, allowing postal customers to shop for groceries, eat at local restaurants, and take care of other needs, as part of one trip.

Recent Postal Service trends have been to move post offices out of downtowns. When post offices move to the edge of town, citizens are only given the option of taking care of their postal needs outside of the downtown business community. Over time, the move leaves other retail developers little choice but to locate where people make their daily trips – the new post office, out by the highway.

While some of these relocations may be necessary, many have hurt downtown business districts, have contributed to the decline of our towns, and have reduced the access elderly and disabled citizens have to postal services. Town residents often have received little notice of these decisions, and these relocations have frequently undermined local plans for the future.

Despite the fact that post office relocations play an important role in shaping community development, there are no statutory requirements for the Postal Service to consult with the community and their customers before making these decisions. Lack of community input into postal decisions is often exacerbated when the Postal Service ignores local zoning laws and building codes during construction of these new facilities. The Postal Service today is exempt from local zoning and building laws, and has frequently ignored them.

When the Postal Service ignores local zoning laws, which are in place to protect the health and safety of the local community, that action reflects badly on the federal government as a whole. This is especially troubling when the local development law is created to meet federal standards. As recently as last year, the Postal Service attempted to evade local clean water standards in Tallahassee, Florida, and ignore local laws put in place in Ball Ground, Georgia, which were an attempt to meet Federal clean air standards. These actions would be criminal if they were attempted by a private company, but are merely shameful when pursued by the Postal Service.

Good neighbors talk to their neighbors before making changes that are harmful to others. Good neighbors also follow the same laws as their neighbors. We encourage you to support S. 556, and require the Postal Service to be a good neighbor.

S. 556, and the identical H.R. 670 introduced by Representative Earl Blumenauer, provide a good road map for how community involvement should take place. The bills make sure the Federal Government is a help and not a hindrance in efforts to revitalize American communities, by requiring the Postal Service to give adequate public notice and to adequately involve the community when these decisions are made. And perhaps most important, both bills require the Postal Service to abide by the same local zoning, planning and land use laws that all other property owners must abide by.

We recognize that since Senator Jeffords, Senator Baucus and Representative Blumenauer began to pursue postal legislation, the United States Postal Service has improved its outreach to communities. Specifically, the public involvement procedures made effective on October 5, 1998, involve the community earlier and more substantively than what has historically occurred. That being said, we feel strongly that the Postal Service's internal rules do not go far enough. And we are also concerned that, since the Postal Service is not legally bound to follow the new procedures, what gains have been made could erode over time.

Thank you for considering our views -- should you wish to discuss these issues further please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

National Association of Counties
National League of Cities
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
National Trust for Historic Preservation
American Planning Association
Preservation Action
International Downtown Association
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions

P R E S E R V A T I O N

Action

October 5, 1999

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services
442 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6252

Re: Statement for the record in support of the Post Office Community Partnership Act (S. 556)

Dear Chairman Cochran:

Preservation Action, as the national grassroots lobby for historic preservation, urges your support for the Post Office Community Partnership Act (S. 556). Citizens across the country have adopted local zoning, planning and land use laws to protect the historic character, property values, and health of their communities. It is only fair that the United States Postal Service, like any member of a community, abide by these enacted laws.

S. 556 would require the Postal Service to notify a local community about, and give it an opportunity to participate in, decisions regarding the relocation, closing or consolidation of any post office. In response to a similar bill in the 105th Congress, the United States Postal Service put into effect on October 5, 1998 internal rules to accommodate citizens into these planning processes. The Post Office claims these internal rules are adequate and therefore S. 556 is unwarranted, but Preservation Action knows internal rules do not have the weight of law and can be ignored when convenient. The example of Oklahoma City's Pennville Historic District and the United States Postal Service is a case in point.

The Pennville Historic District is a mixed-income neighborhood. Pennville residents work hard to make sure the historic architecture and desirability of their neighborhood is protected. Oftentimes this means repairs and new buildings must be of traditional materials and fit into the existing neighborhood. So it should be no surprise that in the spring of 1997 when the Post Office announced it was planting metal posts with plastic mailboxes in residents' yards, the community gathered (in less than 48 hours) 3,000 petition signatures opposing the invasion of postal sentinels. *The actions of the Post Office are even more egregious in light of one of their own internal rules*; that when changing the format of delivery, the Post Office must first receive permission from the owner. The residents of Pennville were not asked, but rather ordered to accept the Post Office's change. Later, the recalcitrance of postal officials towards residents' objections eventually required the negotiation of a mailbox moratorium mediated by United States Representative Ernest Istook, Jr.

The consequences of relocating, closing or consolidating any post office may seem larger than those faced in the Pennville neighborhood, but in any of these instances American citizens deserve more respect from the Postal Service. Citizens working to improve and preserve their communities need the guarantees of law provided by S. 556, not the vagaries of internal "rules." Please support S. 556 and make sure the postal service acts as a good partner in towns big and small across the country.

Sincerely,

Susan West Montgomery
Susan West Montgomery,
President

1350 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20036

EARL BLUMENAUER
THIRD DISTRICT, OREGON
COMMITTEE:
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
GROUND TRANSPORTATION
WATER RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENT



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3703

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1406 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3703
(202) 225-4811
FAX: (202) 225-8941
DISTRICT OFFICE:
THE WEATHERLY BUILDING
516 S.E. MONROE STREET
SUITE 250
PORTLAND, OR 97214
(503) 231-4200
FAX: (503) 230-5413
email: write.earl@mail.house.gov
website: <http://www.house.gov/blumenauer>

October 6, 1999

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 442
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
Ranking Member
Committee on Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 326
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Akaka:

The public does not need new rules, regulations and mandates placed upon them to make our communities more livable. Indeed, the most significant contribution the Federal government can make is to be a constructive partner with states, local governments and the private sector to help our communities work better. One small but important step would be to have Federal agencies like the United States Postal Service obey the same rules and regulations that we require homeowners and businesses to follow.

There are over 40,000 post offices all across America. They are both symbols for how we connect to one another, and a very real part of the community. Time and time again, we find that the post office on Main Street anchors Main Street business activity; it is a source of pride for people in the local communities; often it is a historic structure.

Each of these post offices is an opportunity for the Federal government to promote livable communities by being a constructive partner. Unfortunately, rather than seizing these opportunities for collaboration, the Postal Service's flawed facilities process too often creates conflict, and inflicts damage, upon the towns and cities they are found in. Sometimes historic post offices are removed from historic downtown locations, destroying the viability of the business district and limiting the access the elderly have to postal services. In many other cases, the Postal Service simply has not been the type of neighbor that our communities deserve and they have chosen to ignore the local laws that everyone else must abide by. While I would be the last to suggest the town residents are always right and the Postal Service is always wrong, I have seen too many examples where the Postal Service has not made a good faith effort to constructively engage the community.

A good example of the lack of understanding by the Postal Service regarding the power of cooperation can be found in Portland, Oregon, where land use planning has been a hallmark for a generation. There is perhaps no American metropolitan area that has worked harder to manage growth. We try to locate basic infrastructure where it will be needed and where it will do the most good, and try to not simply chase events after the fact. Most recently, the region adopted a "2040 Plan" to prepare for growth over the next several decades.

The Postal Service, with over 500 facilities in the fast-growing Portland region, acknowledges that it is playing a serious game of "catch-up." Yet the Postal Service made no attempts to coordinate their facilities planning with the "2040 Plan" – in fact, they admitted they were completely unaware that the process had taken place at all. This ignorance despite the fact that over 17,000 citizens and businesses, and all the local government units participated directly in the planning for over five years.

Knowing where growth will be concentrated in the years ahead would have enabled the Postal Service to make strategic decisions in a way that would take advantage of this change rather than trying to play "catch-up." The Federal government cannot afford to pursue its own independent strategies. Not only are opportunities lost for coordinated response, avoiding mistakes, saving money, time and effort in the future but the credibility of Federal agencies, or in this case the Postal Service, is dramatically undercut.

Another, perhaps more generic, problem occurred during the construction of a new Portland post office and involved an abuse of local land use laws. When notified of the building requirements, the Postal Service wrote to the City indicating that they were immune from all local laws, but would try and accommodate the city's desires. Despite the fact that any other business, or the City of Portland itself, would have been required to build sidewalks for pedestrian safety at the site, the Postal Service decided they couldn't accommodate this law. After a protracted battle, the City managed to get half of the required sidewalks, but only after threatening to block the entrance to the post office's parking lot.

To help the Postal Service and our Communities be better partners, I introduced legislation in the 105th Congress (H.R. 1231) that requires the Postal Service to obey local land use and planning laws and work with the local communities before they make decisions that can have such a wrenching effect on the fabric of a community. I have reintroduced this legislation in the 106th Congress (H.R. 670), and am pleased that Senator Baucus and Jeffords have joined the effort on the Senate side with the introduction of S. 556.

The bill has attracted a broad coalition of supporters, including governors, cities, counties and mayors, as well as a host of preservation groups. In addition, H.R. 670 and S. 556 are maybe the only environmental priorities that have won the support of both the National Association of Homebuilders and the Sierra Club. It is ironic that Postal Service gives the public more input into what version of the Elvis stamp it is going to produce than decisions that really can be life and death for small town America. It is time we passed these bills and provided our communities a statutory right to be involved in major post office facility decisions.

The Postal Service has repeatedly questioned the need for H.R. 670 and S. 556, pointing out what they feel are fatal flaws in the legislation. In response, Senators Baucus and Jeffords and myself, as well as the supporting groups, have invited the Postal Service to work with us to make a bill we can all support. To date, the Postal Service has chosen not to work with us to develop consensus legislation. It is time for them to stop fighting our legislation, get on board and work with us to make sure that the Postal Service is a full partner for the next millennium of livable communities in America.

Thank you for considering my comments and for conducting a hearing on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



1201 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 822-0470
(800) 368-5242, ext. 470
Fax: (202) 861-2135
E-mail: jhoward@nahb.com

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIVISION

Gerald M. Howard
Senior Staff Vice President

October 7, 1999

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chair
International Security, Proliferation and
Federal Services Subcommittee
Senate Governmental Affairs Committee
United States Senate
442 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the 200,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for S. 556, the "Post Office Community Partnership Act," introduced by Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and James Jeffords (R-VT), and companion legislation, H.R. 670, introduced by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR).

As you may know, NAHB is committed to the concept of Smart Growth, which is one of the most critical issues confronting America today. It is an idea that addresses the questions of how best to plan for and manage growth, when and where new residential and commercial development should be built and located, and how to pay for the infrastructure required to sustain a growing population.

Generally, local jurisdictions rely on comprehensive planning as the single most important method of local growth management. Comprehensive growth plans direct the timing and location of future zoning actions, land use development, the nature and timing of development, the expansion of public facilities, and the preservation of historic and environmentally sensitive areas.

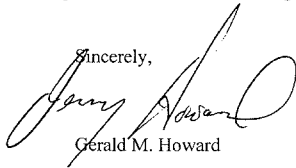
As home builders, our members abide by the local zoning, permit, and building code laws in order to develop responsibly and preserve the integrity of communities. The United States Postal Service, however, is currently not required to adhere to state or local codes when relocating, closing, consolidating or constructing facilities. This noncompliance undermines the economic and social well-being of communities by permitting the Postal Service to build new facilities or modify existing facilities without regard to local plans for growth or traffic management, environmental protection, and public safety.

NAHB strongly believes that the federal government should follow the same rules as the American public. That is why we support the "Post Office Community Partnership Act." This legislation would ensure that the Postal Service considers the impacts on a community of its

decisions to build or relocate a facility. Specifically, it would require the Postal Service to comply with the same local zoning and building codes that apply to the home building industry.

It is time for the U.S. Postal Service to be a good neighbor to American communities. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views before your subcommittee, Mr. Chairman, and we look forward to working with you and the sponsors of these bills to bring greater fairness into the regulatory process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald M. Howard", written in a cursive style.

Gerald M. Howard

NALC-VERMONT
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS
VERMONT STATE ASSOCIATION



POST OFFICE BOX 161
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05402

September 30, 1999

The United States Postal Service's universal service at the same cost - six days a week - is important to all Americans. It might be more important to Americans who are not on the internet; who do not receive daily papers or weekly periodicals; who are not subscribers to cable television. The need to feel connected to the information of the country and the world is what the post office can provide. Not only by its delivery service, but by its ability to provide a center for communication in the town.

One might have to live in a small town to realize the importance of the post office and its location. It seems clear, that including the community in the decision making process concerning *their* post office in *their* community is a great idea. It would certainly increase the chance for making the best decision and provide some old fashion common courtesy.

Unquestionably, the passage of the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999 (S 556) would make sense in my community.

Sincerely,

James W. Posig
President

The local post office plays a vital role in small-town community life. It usually provides the only link between the people and their federal government. Residents can visit their post office lobbies to obtain information from government agencies, purchase a federal duck stamp, find out the addresses of their Senators and Representatives in Washington or register for the Selective Service. It's also a central gathering place where residents keep in touch with one another, reinforcing their sense of community. And it is staffed with neighbors serving neighbors, providing a level of personalized service not readily found in urban offices.

Currently there is no legislation in place to assure that the Postal Service will make decisions regarding the location, closing or consolidation of post offices without first consulting the people who will be directly affected by those decisions. The lack of safeguards has resulted in the relocation of some offices far enough away from the downtown areas to create inconvenience and hardship to the residents, especially the elderly and those unable to provide their own transportation. When a post office is permanently closed, it deprives the community of its identity and places a burden on residents who are then required to travel to a nearby town, sometimes at a considerable distance, to conduct postal business.

At the very least, a post office should remain within the boundaries of the community it serves. When the Postal Service relocated the Perkinsville, Vermont, office several years ago, it moved the facility far enough away that it is no longer within the village of Perkinsville, but is now located in the village of Weathersfield. The protestations of the residents of Perkinsville fell on deaf ears.

There is an obvious need for legislation to assure that the Postal Service will be responsive to the needs of the people it serves. They are, after all, the ones who will have to live with those decisions. Please support S. 556, "The Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999."

Mary E. Nadeau

Mary E. Nadeau
P O Box 212
Hartford VT 05047-0212

(802)295-2123

Senator Max Baucus
Testimony Before the Senate Government Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services
October 7, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member. I appreciate your holding this hearing and allowing Senator Jeffords and I the opportunity to testify before you today on the merits of the Post Office Community Partnership Act. Before I begin, let me recognize the contributions of those who made this bill happen. Congressman Earl Blumenauer, the National Trust and the National Association of Postmasters of the United States should be commended for working with all parties and putting together a good bill. They got this ball rolling a couple of years ago.

So why are we here today, Mr. Chairman? What is the ball that is rolling? In short, people want a say in how their communities look and feel. And in large measure, that look and feel depends on the location of the local post office.

The premise of the Community and Postal Participation Act is simple: it allows public input in the Postal Service decision-making process. Under current law, communities have little say when the USPS decides to pull up stakes. Our legislation would change that by:

- ensuring that people are informed of Postal Service decisions to relocate, close, open or consolidate a post office;
- giving those affected a hearing and the chance to offer alternatives to the USPS proposals;
- allowing those affected to appeal Postal Service decisions to the Postal Rate Commission; and
- requiring the USPS to comply with applicable zoning, planning or land use laws.

The Postal Service has indicated its interest in a number of these provisions by incorporating them into its rules. But it has stopped short of supporting their becoming law.

Mr. Chairman, in 1968 there were 383 Montana towns with active post offices; fifteen years later, there were around 360. Now there are just over 300. I find that sad. I remember as a kid going to the post office, which was then part of the central business district. I remember buying candy, picking up the mail and getting a haircut all in one trip. Seeing my friends and neighbors downtown fostered a sense of community there, one which I believe is increasingly in jeopardy. The closing or relocation of post offices to towns' outskirts has contributed to the decline of what we affectionately refer to as "small-town America."

And while I recognize that the Postal Service has declared a moratorium on the closing of

post offices, the same cannot be said of post office consolidations and relocations.

Consider the case of Livingston, Montana.

A couple of years ago, the Postal Service decided it would close the post office in downtown Livingston, Montana. They announced -- without community input-- that they would build a new building on the edge of town. No notice, no opportunity to try to work something out with the Postal Service, no way to stop the post office from moving out of this very popular and historic part of town.

So I went to Livingston and decided to see what was going on. I tried to tour the facility and was told, "Sorry, Senator, you can't come in just yet. We have to check in with headquarters to see if you are allowed."

So I cooled my heels for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 20 minutes. Forty five minutes later they got approval from Postal Service headquarters and allowed me in. I toured the facility, and got a sense of why Livingston folks love their post office so much. I fought to keep it there, and fortunately we succeeded.

Why is there such attention focused on the impacts of growth? Some say that the tax code drives development in outlying areas while urban and downtown business districts fail. Others suggest that the Federal government's policies on location of post offices and Federal offices has pushed growth out of small and large cities alike.

Whatever the case, Mr. Chairman, I believe these are decisions that should be made with the input of the community affected. I should not have needed to go to Livingston to convince the Postal Service not to move.

The same is true in Red Lodge, Montana, where the Postal Service bought land at the north end of town without telling anyone and decided to build downtown only after tremendous public outcry.

In Whitefish, Montana, the Postal Service put their drop box in the right of way of a main street without asking the community's opinion. In Augusta, near my home town of Helena, the Postal Service decided to build a huge post office on the edge of town without any input from the local community. According to Sara Walsh, an Augusta business owner, "The Postal Service's move to a large building on Augusta's outskirts has hurt downtown businesses...the post office is not the community hub that it used to be...they acted against the community's wishes."

Mr. Chairman, this legislation does nothing to stop the Postal Service from making needed changes to its facilities and serving its customers. To the contrary, by fostering cooperation, it encourages participation by all parties involved. In short it puts the community back in the post office. And I think that's a good idea.

Thank you again for calling this hearing.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTMASTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES
8 HERBERT STREET
ALEXANDRIA VA 22305-2600

(703) 693-9027
FAX: (703) 693-6820
WEBSITE: www.napus.org

Testimony of Howard S. Foust
President, National Association of Postmasters
of the United States Retired

Before the Senate Subcommittee on
International Proliferation, Security, and
Federal Services

October 7, 1999

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am Howard Foust, President of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States Postmasters Retired (NAPUS). Prior to retiring, I served as postmaster of Plain City, Ohio for 28 years. NAPUS represents more than 43,000 active and retired postmasters throughout the nation.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our views regarding postal closures. Furthermore, postmasters want to thank you for highlighting S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act. The measure, introduced by Senator Baucus and Senator Jeffords, would help to address a serious threat to the future of small and rural communities throughout the United States. It is important to recall that last year the Senate passed by voice vote a provision similar to S. 556.

Mr. Chairman, while postmasters recognize that demographic changes often necessitate operational modifications for certain communities, NAPUS opposes the arbitrary closing, consolidation and suspension of post offices. To investigate the soundness of such actions, NAPUS created the "Committee for the Preservation of an Historic Universal Postal Service." It is a delegation composed of knowledgeable retired postmasters. The committee monitors the actions of Postal Service managers to make sure that the proper procedures are followed relating to postal closings, including suspensions and consolidations. At the conclusion of its investigation, the group reports its findings to the NAPUS national office and shares the results with the Postal Service. While this unofficial procedure is helpful, NAPUS believes that the most effective way to curtail unwarranted suspensions is through enactment of S. 556.

Mr. Chairman, approximately 500 post offices are presently under temporary emergency suspension. 220 of these post offices have been "temporarily" suspended for more than five years. NAPUS believes that the Postal Service has no intention of ever reopening most of these facilities. Citizens, businesses, and local officials of communities affected by suspensions have concluded that the Postal Service has elected to circumvent the Postal Reorganization Act's procedure for closing a post office by using the suspension ploy. The Postal Service should have followed the Postal Reorganization Act stipulated procedures regarding closure.

I would like to focus on the provisions in the S. 556 that would help to safeguard postal services throughout the nation by putting a brake on the misuse of suspensions. Section 2, b(12) of the bill would ensure that if a post office is closed, it is closed for the right reasons and that the proper procedures are followed. In sum, S. 556 would prevent the Postal Service from misusing the right to suspend postal services, limit such actions to real emergencies, and guarantee that such actions are temporary.

Allow me to explain what is supposed to occur when the Postal Service must temporarily suspend postal operations at a particular post office. The Postal Service must first declare that an emergency condition exists and that it is a threat to the health and safety of postal employees or customers, or security of the mail. Such situations include a natural disaster or a lease termination. Then, the district manager is required to notify Postal Headquarters of the suspension, and must notify customers of the reason for the suspension, as well as alternative locations to receive postal services. Within six months, the district manager must decide whether

to reopen the post office or begin a study to decide whether to permanently close it. However, postal regulations do not establish a time limit for the completion of such a study. As a consequence, the Postal Service may institute a temporary suspension of postal services without a time limit.

S. 556 helps to protect small communities from the misguided decision by postal officials from initiating so-called temporary emergency suspensions of post office operations, by limiting a temporary suspension to 180 days. This would help to guarantee that temporary suspensions are truly temporary, and are the result of emergency situations.

As I stated earlier, current law provides a specific procedure through the Postal Rate Commission should the postal service decide to close a specific post office, yet no such procedure is required to invoke a "temporary emergency suspension." As a result, the Postal Service has found that it is much easier to suspend an office rather than close it. S. 556 helps to remedy the misuse of the Postal Service's suspension power.

The expiration of a post office's lease and the retirement of a local postmaster is a predictable event. Six months is enough time to locate a suitable site to replace the former one. Furthermore, the decision of the Postal Service to disregard the maintenance of older post offices and leaving the physical plant in disrepair should not be misused as the basis of such suspensions.

In rural and suburban communities around the nation, postmasters serve as the vital link between the federal government, and the citizens and small businesses. The suspension of full service postal operations disrupts this vital link, and interferes with communications and commerce within these much overlooked areas of the country.

In conclusion, a 1997 General Accounting Office report established that "Post Offices under emergency suspension affect customers in much the same way as post offices that are officially closed in that services from those post offices are also no longer available." NAPUS believes that the law should recognize this fact.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office	State	Zipcode	Level	Suspend date	Area	District
Abington	CT	06230	13	28-Dec-91	Northeast	Connecticut
Adrian	IL	62310	C	24-Jul-92	Midwest	Gateway
Akers	LA	70421	B	01-Aug-91	Southwest	New Orleans
Alabama	NY	14003	11	17-Jul-87	Northeast	Western New York
Alba	PA	16910	C	10-Sep-96	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Alpaca	WV	24710	E	25-Jul-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Amesgle	WV	25004	E	29-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Amherst	SD	57421	C	28-Jul-97	Midwest	Dakotas
Armsden	OH	44803	E	26-Jun-97	Allegheny	Akron
Arpovale	WV	24915	11	19-Feb-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Ashland	WV	24610	11	25-Sep-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Atwater	IL	62511	C	06-Aug-87	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Aultman	PA	15713	11	30-Dec-88	Allegheny	Erie
Auto	WV	24917	B	01-May-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Azala	MI	48110		18-Jun-88	Great Lakes	Detroit
Bakers Summit	PA	15614	E	24-Mar-89	Allegheny	Erie
Bakersville	OH	43803	C	19-Dec-97	Allegheny	Columbus
Said Knob	WV	25010	11	03-Sep-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Balkegee	WV	24919	C	28-Sep-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Barnhill	IL	62809	E	19-Dec-85	Midwest	Gateway
Bayou Gouta	LA	70716	11	02-Feb-92	Southwest	New Orleans
Bebe	TX	79603	D	01-Jun-96	Southwest	San Antonio
Bee	VA	24217	11	23-May-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Beeson	WV	24714	E	29-Mar-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bellamy	VA	23017	11	28-Feb-97	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Belvidere Center	VT	05442		31-Jul-87	Northeast	Springfield
Bendavis	MO	65433	A	26-Jun-92	Midwest	Mid-America
Benge	WA	99105	D	17-Nov-97	Western	Spokane
Bennington	NH	03442	13	07-Nov-90	Northeast	New Hampshire
Bens Run	WV	26135	E	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bentley	WV	25018	11	29-Sep-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bered	WV	25327	A	14-Apr-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Berkshire	MA	01224	11	13-May-88	Northeast	Springfield
Beulah	MO	65436	C	17-Nov-95	Midwest	Mid-America
Birds Eye	AR	72314	C	30-Aug-97	Southwest	Arkansas
Blackwell	MO	63626	A	21-Nov-97	Midwest	Mid-America
Blanch	NC	27212	C	16-Nov-91	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Blainville	WV	25328	A	14-Jun-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Blanks	LA	70717	C	24-Mar-95	Southwest	New Orleans
Booth	WV	26522	11	12-Apr-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Boswell	AR	72516	B	25-Dec-96	Southwest	Arkansas
Branch	WI	54203		30-Dec-83	Midwest	Milwaukee
Branchton	PA	16021	A	07-Aug-95	Allegheny	Erie
Brandy Camp	PA	15822	C	17-Sep-93	Allegheny	Erie
Bridgewater	MI	48115		28-Feb-93	Great Lakes	Detroit
Bristol	WV	25332	13	23-Aug-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brough	WV	26138	C	28-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brownston	WV	25334	E	28-Jun-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brubington	VA	23023	C	04-Aug-94	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Bueche	LA	70720	11	28-Dec-90	Southwest	New Orleans
Burnside	IL	62318	C	16-Feb-96	Midwest	Gateway
Burnt Corn	AL	36431	C	07-Apr-97	Southwest	Alabama
Burt	NY	14028	13	06-Jun-97	Northeast	Western New York
Buckirk	NY	12028	11	15-May-97	Northeast	Albany
Cache	IL	62913	E	26-Nov-86	Midwest	Gateway
Camp Dix	KY	41127	C	29-Nov-95	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Capels	WV	24520	11	30-Aug-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Caplinger Mills	MO	65607	B	03-Nov-95	Midwest	Mid-America
Carretta	WV	24921	11	06-Jun-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office state zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Corey	TX	79222	C	26-Apr-89	Southwest	Ft Worth
Carlisle	LA	70042	11	31-Dec-92	Southwest	New Orleans
Carter	SD	57580		22-Nov-85	Midwest	Dakotas
Cartersburg	IN	46114	E	03-Jan-91	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Cayuse	OR	97521	C	22-Dec-86	Western	Portland
Cedar City	MO	65022	13	04-Feb-94	Midwest	Gateway
Center Point	WV	26339	E	22-Jul-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Central Station	WV	26340		20-Sep-82	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Centerville	PA	17927	11	17-Sep-94	Allegheny	Lawrence
Centerville	WV	26612	C	26-Aug-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Chalk	TX	79224		04-Nov-85	Southwest	Ft Worth
Chance	MD	21816	11	01-Dec-90	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Casco	KY	41610	A	27-Feb-93	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Clay	TX	77839		07-Dec-88	Southwest	Houston
Climax	PA	16216	A	03-Oct-92	Allegheny	Erie
Clio	WV	25046	E	28-Jul-89	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Coalwood	WV	25824	11	22-Nov-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Colcord	WV	25048	11	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
College City	CA	95931	C	05-Jan-98	Pacific	Sacramento
Conran	MO	63838	C	31-Jul-92	Midwest	Mid-America
Cook Station	MO	65449	E	21-Mar-97	Midwest	Mid-America
Cooksville	MD	21723	11	30-Mar-90	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Cole	WV	26529	11	30-Jul-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Cove Gap	WV	25509		29-Feb-84	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Cawlesville	NY	14037	13	14-Oct-95	Northeast	Western New York
Cayville	KS	66727	A	30-Jun-96	Midwest	Mid-America
Creola	OH	45622	11	15-May-92	Allegheny	Columbus
Crichton	WV	25961	C	18-Oct-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Crumpler	WV	24825	11	15-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Dabolt	KY	40421	A	18-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Dames Quarter	MD	21820	11	22-Aug-91	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Davert	LA	70046	11	31-Mar-89	Southwest	New Orleans
Davis Wharf	VA	23345	C	06-May-93	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Delancey	NY	13752	13	29-Oct-93	Northeast	Albany
Delaware	IA	52036	C	09-Feb-98	Midwest	Hawkeye
Denver	KY	41215	D	02-Jan-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
DeYoung	PA	16728	A	14-May-93	Allegheny	Erie
Drury	MO	65638	11	10-Jan-97	Midwest	Mid-America
Eagle Rock	NC	27523	C	30-Dec-88	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
East Berkshire	VT	05447		30-Aug-85	Northeast	Springfield
East Hebron	NH	03232	11	22-Oct-94	Northeast	New Hampshire
East Pharsalia	NY	13758	E	30-Apr-97	Northeast	Albany
Echo	UT	84024	C	27-May-93	Western	Salt Lake City
Edmon	PA	15630	E	31-Oct-94	Allegheny	Pittsburgh
Edmund	WI	53535	C	01-Aug-95	Midwest	Milwaukee
Edwardsville	VA	22456	11	26-Nov-93	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Elba	ID	83326	C	20-Jan-96	Western	Spokane
Elderon	WI	54429	E	01-Jun-95	Midwest	Milwaukee
Elfersville	PA	15036	E	30-Dec-95	Allegheny	Pittsburgh
Elgin	AZ	85611		27-Jun-87	Western	Phoenix
Ellery	IL	62833		30-Nov-85	Midwest	Gateway
Elm Springs	SD	57791		30-Jun-84	Midwest	Dakotas
Elmva	WV	26618	A	19-Apr-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
English	WV	24832	11	05-Jul-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Entmken	PA	16638	E	18-Sep-92	Allegheny	Erie
Estcourt Station	ME	04741	A	02-Oct-95	Northeast	Maine
Everettville	WV	26533	E	30-Sep-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Fairfield	ND	58527	E	20-Feb-98	Midwest	Dakotas
Farrack	WV	24834	E	05-Nov-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office	State	Zip Code	Level	Suspend date	Area	District
Fife	VA	23054	E	27-Jul-90	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Fifty	IN	46129	E	30-Nov-90	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Floyd Dale	SC	29542	11	03-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Greater SC
Foneswood	VA	22461	B	31-Dec-93	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Fort Spring	WV	24936	11	31-May-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Foster	NE	68737	C	24-Oct-97	Midwest	Central Plains
Fox	OR	97831	C	14-Nov-97	Western	Portland
Freeman	WV	24724	13	07-Aug-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Fruitvale	ID	83620	E	27-Dec-96	Western	Spokane
Ft. Detention	VA	24437	C	30-Aug-91	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Fullerton	LA	70642	C	21-Feb-92	Southwest	New Orleans
Fulton	KS	66738	A	06-Jan-98	Midwest	Mid-America
Gapland	MD	21736	11	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Garrison	MD	21055		29-Jan-88	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Garrison	MO	65657	A	20-Oct-95	Midwest	Mid-America
Garvin	MN	56132	A	02-Oct-92	Midwest	Northland
Garlow	IL	61435	D	31-Dec-89	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Geuens	LA	70355	11	30-Nov-90	Southwest	New Orleans
Glimer	WV	26350	D	30-Jun-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glaze	WV	24942	A	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glad Valley	SD	57629	C	25-Apr-97	Midwest	Dakotas
Glasgo	CT	06337	E	01-Jan-93	Northeast	Connecticut
Glen Morgan	WV	25847	13	28-Feb-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glenhays	WV	25519	A	06-May-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glover	MO	63546	11	31-Dec-91	Midwest	Mid-America
Godeffray	NY	12739	11	28-Feb-90	New York	Westchester
Goldbond	VA	24094	11	01-Feb-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Goodson	MO	65659	11	03-Sep-91	Midwest	Mid-America
Gordon	OH	45329	11	31-Aug-93	Allegheny	Cincinnati
Gowan City	PA	17828	E	29-Oct-94	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Grassflat	PA	16839	11	31-Aug-94	Allegheny	Erie
Grassy	MO	63753	C	15-Nov-91	Midwest	Mid-America
Grays River	WA	98621	11	20-Jan-96	Western	Portland
Green Park	PA	17031	E	31-Aug-96	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Grimms Landing	WV	25095	C	08-Jan-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Grove	ME	04638	A	01-Sep-95	Northeast	Maine
Gumberry	NC	27838	E	12-Mar-90	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Gunlock	UT	84733	C	13-Nov-95	Western	Salt Lake City
Hadley	KY	42235	A	14-Oct-94	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Haldeman	KY	40329	D	02-Jan-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Hamberg	ND	58337	C	09-Nov-96	Midwest	Dakotas
Hamlet	NE	69031	D	31-Jan-97	Midwest	Central Plains
Hampden	WV	25623	11	09-Aug-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Harmon	VA	24618	11	18-Nov-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Hartfield	MN	56164	A	20-May-89	Midwest	Northland
Hatten	AR	71946	E	26-Oct-93	Southwest	Arkansas
Havaca	WV	24841	E	28-Sep-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Hazelton	WV	26635	C	22-Dec-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Henryton	MD	21080		02-Mar-82	DC Metro	Baltimore
Herald	IL	62845	A	13-Feb-98	Midwest	Gateway
Herrick Center	PA	18430	C	19-Feb-84	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Hefland	SD	57244	C	10-Dec-97	Midwest	Dakotas
Hillsburg	IN	46046	C	01-Jul-92	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Hines	WV	25967	11	07-May-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Holabird	SD	57540	C	03-Oct-92	Midwest	Dakotas
Holden	UT	84636	11	29-Mar-93	Western	Salt Lake City
Holder	IL	61746	C	06-Dec-85	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Homer	IN	46145	C	10-Jul-95	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Horton	MO	64751	11	16-Aug-96	Midwest	Mid-America

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office State Zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Howell	AR	72071	A	23-Mar-85	Southwest	Arkansas
Huntly	VA	22640	E	10-Jan-92	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Huntsville	IL	62344	C	27-Apr-96	Midwest	Gateway
Idewild	TN	38346	C	23-May-97	Southeast	Tennessee
Jamsville	MD	21754		06-Dec-85	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Independence	WV	26374	13	04-Dec-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Industrial	WV	26375	E	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Iona, SD	SD	57542	A	04-Nov-83	Midwest	Dakotas
Ivyton	KY	41444	A	03-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Jamaica	VA	23079	E	18-Jun-96	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Jenkins Bridge	VA	23399	C	05-Mar-93	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Jennie	AR	71649	E	02-Nov-91	Southwest	Arkansas
Jodie	WV	26674	E	23-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Jonben	WV	25856	E	18-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Junction	WV	26824	C	30-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Juneau	PA	15751	C	31-Mar-88	Allegheny	Penn
Justiceburg	TX	79330	C	30-May-97	Southwest	Ft Worth
Kanawha Falls	WV	25115	C	28-Apr-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kanther	PA	15648	E	30-Sep-92	Allegheny	Penn
Kempster	WI	54444	C	18-Oct-93	Midwest	Midwest
Keystone	WV	24852	13	25-Nov-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kieffer	WV	24950	C	28-Feb-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kilona	LA	70066	13	01-Nov-89	Southwest	New Orleans
Kilsyth	WV	25859	11	27-Jun-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kirkland	TX	79238	A	02-Sep-83	Southwest	Ft Worth
Knoxville	MD	21758	15	24-Aug-87	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Knoxville	GA	31050	11	02-Oct-92	Southeast	Macon
Kohler	WI	53044	18	01-Oct-84	Midwest	Midwest
Kopperston	WV	24854	11	23-Jun-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Labarre	LA	70751	D	27-Aug-93	Southwest	New Orleans
Lakeside	CT	06758	11	27-Nov-95	Northeast	Connecticut
Lakewood	IL	62438	11	10-Mar-95	Midwest	Gateway
Lakin	WV	25250	11	26-Jul-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lawrenceville	NY	12949	13	15-Dec-93	Northeast	Albany
Leander	KY	41228	E	03-Jan-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Lackle	WV	24856	E	04-Oct-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lecoma	MO	65540	C	01-May-90	Midwest	Mid-America
Lee City	KY	41342	C	03-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Leewood	WV	25122	E	17-May-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lefor	ND	58641	E	01-Nov-96	Midwest	Dakotas
Lenox	MO	65541	C	10-Oct-97	Midwest	Mid-America
Lenox	AL	36454	C	18-Sep-92	Southeast	Alabama
Leon	VA	22725	E	29-Mar-96	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Leon Junction	TX	76552	C	02-Oct-92	Southwest	San Antonio
Levols	WV	25431		16-Oct-81	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Limerick	NY	13657	E	12-Dec-94	Northeast	Albany
Linden	WV	25256	C	16-Mar-90	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lindseyville	KY	42257	C	29-Aug-96	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Linwood	MD	21764	11	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Liste	PA	15549	11	31-Dec-92	Allegheny	Penn
Lockney	WV	25258	C	15-Dec-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Long Valley	SD	57547	E	02-Mar-90	Midwest	Dakotas
Loretto	VA	22609	C	18-Jun-97	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Ludell	KS	67744	A	05-Apr-95	Midwest	Central Plains
Ludlow	SD	57755	C	21-Jul-95	Midwest	Dakotas
Luebbering	MO	63061	C	01-Mar-96	Midwest	Gateway
Lynchburg	MO	65543	E	29-Mar-96	Midwest	Mid-America
Maben	WV	25870	11	08-Sep-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Mackburg	OH	45746	11	02-Aug-97	Allegheny	Columbus

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office State Zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Macon	VA	23101	C	04-Jun-90	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Madison Mills	VA	22953	11	13-Apr-96	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Maier	CO	81421	C	26-Feb-88	Western	Cerver
Mansfield Depot	CT	06251	13	17-Jan-97	Northeast	Connecticut
Martin	ND	58758	C	22-Nov-96	Midwest	Dakotas
Masses Mill	VA	22954	C	16-Sep-96	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Maysfield	TX	76555	C	02-Oct-92	Southwest	San Antonio
McClurg	MO	65731	C	10-Dec-93	Midwest	Mid-America
McCoy	TX	79053	A	27-Mar-96	Southwest	San Antonio
Meador	WV	25682	11	13-Feb-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Meadow Bluff	WV	24958	C	02-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Meadows	NH	03587	D	02-Dec-88	Northeast	New Hampshire
Meckling	SD	57044	X	14-Nov-97	Midwest	Dakotas
Mecley	WV	26734	A	30-Apr-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Melrose	CT	06049	11	31-Mar-90	Northeast	Connecticut
Mentole	PA	15761	L	29-May-92	Allegheny	Erie
Midnight	MS	39115	11	22-Nov-96	Southeast	Mississippi
Miguan	PA	19452	11	13-Oct-95	Allegheny	Lancaster
Mission Ridge	SD	57557	A	31-Jan-89	Midwest	Dakotas
Miston	TN	38056		31-Jul-85	Southeast	Tennessee
Modeste	LA	70376	11	02-Oct-92	Southwest	New Orleans
Modestown	VA	23412		18-Nov-88	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Moka	AR	72557	C	14-May-93	Southwest	Arkansas
Monaville	WV	25636	13	18-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Moscow	VT	05662	11	01-Dec-90	Northeast	Springfield
Mountain	WV	26407	A	08-Nov-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Mt. Dara	NM	88429	C	01-Apr-97	Western	Albuquerque
Munday	WV	26152	C	26-Jun-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Munson	PA	16860	C	26-Oct-84	Allegheny	Erie
Munsonville	NH	03457	11	30-Nov-89	Northeast	New Hampshire
Mustoe	VA	24468	E	28-Aug-97	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Nebraska	IN	47262	A	04-Jan-94	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
New Gulf	TX	77462	13	31-Mar-94	Southwest	Houston
New Lisbon	NY	13414	E	13-Oct-95	Northeast	Albany
Newell	AL	36270	A	11-Dec-92	Southeast	Alabama
Nisbel	PA	17759	C	28-Aug-92	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Noble	MO	65713	A	09-Jan-93	Midwest	Mid-America
Nolan	WV	25687	11	15-Dec-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Norway	OR	97460	11	01-Nov-91	Western	Portland
Oaks	UT	84650	C	30-Aug-97	Western	Salt Lake City
Ohley	WV	25147	11	26-Apr-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Ophium	IL	61468	C	30-Nov-90	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Oswegatchie	NY	13670	E	15-Feb-93	Northeast	Albany
Otter Creek	ME	04665	11	10-Jul-97	Northeast	Maine
Otto	TX	76675	11	02-Oct-92	Southwest	San Antonio
Ovappa	WV	25150	E	13-Jun-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Owensko	SD	57767		01-Oct-82	Midwest	Dakotas
Ozone	TN	37842	C	13-Mar-91	Southeast	Tennessee
Page	WV	25152	11	22-Apr-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Parade	SD	57623		01-Sep-89	Midwest	Dakotas
Paris	VA	22130	E	31-Mar-91	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Pascala	MO	63871	F	02-Oct-92	Midwest	Mid-America
Penn	ND	58362	C	25-Oct-96	Midwest	Dakotas
Penrod	KY	42365		26-Aug-94	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Perkins	WV	26634	B	26-Oct-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Perry	TX	76677	C	30-Jun-92	Southwest	San Antonio
Petrey	AL	36062	E	18-Mar-94	Southeast	Alabama
Petroleum	WV	26161	11	15-Jun-87	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Pisgah	MD	20640		31-Jul-92	Mid-Atlantic	Capital

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office State Zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Post Office	State	Zip Code	Level	Suspend date	Area	District
Pleasantville	TN	37147	E	30-May-86	Southeast	Tennessee
Porters Falls	WV	26162	E	16-Jun-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Powhatan	WV	24877	11	08-Dec-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Primm Springs	TN	38476	E	14-Jul-90	Southeast	Tennessee
Provo	SD	57774	C	09-Jun-95	Midwest	Dakotas
Quaker Street	NY	12141	E	23-Sep-85	Northeast	Albany
Queecreek	PA	15555	E	29-Jul-97	Allegheny	Erie
Queen	PA	16670	11	30-Sep-93	Allegheny	Erie
Ramsey	WV	25912	C	30-Sep-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Red Ash	VA	24640	11	12-Aug-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Redford	TX	79846		08-Jan-87	Southwest	San Antonio
Redstar	WV	25914	E	17-Mar-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Remata	OR	97468		30-Nov-90	Western	Portland
Republican Grave	VA	24585	C	12-Sep-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Richardsville	KY	42270	E	25-Jan-93	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Richardsville	VA	22736	C	18-Oct-93	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Richfield	NE	68054	A	21-Nov-89	Midwest	Central Plains
Ridgeway	MI	49275	E	23-Jul-94	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Ritter	OR	97872	A	05-May-89	Western	Portland
Rolin	MI	49278	C	29-Aug-97	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Rosburg	NY	14776	E	27-Dec-91	Northeast	Western New York
Royaton	WI	54975	D	28-Mar-95	Midwest	Milwaukee
Royalty	TX	79779		30-Nov-88	Southwest	San Antonio
Rumford Center	ME	04278	11	30-Sep-95	Northeast	Maine
Rushville	PA	18839	E	18-May-95	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Saint Andrews	TN	37372	11	04-May-92	Southeast	Tennessee
Saint George	ME	04857	11	20-May-93	Northeast	Maine
Saint Paul	KY	41170	A	29-Oct-93	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Sallapa	AL	36570	11	30-Sep-94	Southeast	Alabama
Salvo	NC	27972	11	07-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Sandy	TX	78665	D	02-Oct-92	Southwest	San Antonio
Sandy Level	VA	24161	E	04-Oct-95	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Sardinia	NY	14134	11	31-Jul-95	Northeast	Western New York
Savoy	MA	01256	C	22-Sep-89	Northeast	Springfield
Saxon	WV	25180	C	04-Oct-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Scottville	NC	28672	11	05-Mar-91	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Seaton	PA	15953	E	27-Jul-90	Allegheny	Erie
Seminole	PA	16253	11	05-Jul-94	Allegheny	Erie
Seven Mile Ford	VA	24373	E	30-Dec-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Severn	VA	23155	11	11-Oct-96	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Sharon	WV	25182	11	09-Feb-90	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Shattuc	IL	62283	11	31-Oct-96	Midwest	Gateway
Shattuckville	MA	01369	C	03-May-88	Northeast	Springfield
Sherman	WV	26173	C	05-Apr-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Sidney	IN	46566	E	27-Dec-91	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Skygusty	WV	24883	E	23-Mar-90	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Slade	KY	40376	E	27-Sep-96	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Smith	KY	40867	E	01-Oct-91	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Snow Hill	AL	36779	C	05-Jan-96	Southeast	Alabama
Salon Mills	IL	60080	E	31-Jan-98	Great Lakes	Northern Illinois
Somerset	MI	49281	11	16-Mar-96	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Souderburg	PA	17577			Allegheny	Lancaster
South Britain	CT	06487	13	03-Feb-94	Northeast	Connecticut
South Rutland	NY	13688	C	29-Oct-93	Northeast	Albany
South Shodack	NY	12162	11	27-Feb-90	Northeast	Albany
South Waterford	ME	04081	11	30-Sep-95	Northeast	Maine
Southside	TN	37171	13	05-Dec-91	Southeast	Tennessee
Spalding	ID	83551	C	03-Feb-96	Western	Spokane
Speaks	TX	77985	B	04-Feb-94	Southwest	San Antonio

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office State Zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Spottswood	VA	24475	E	30-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Spratt	AL	36779	I	26-May-93	Southeast	Alabama
Sprau	PA	16682	E	30-Mar-90	Allegheny	Erie
Stacyville	ME	04782	C	07-Jun-97	Northeast	Maine
Stafford	OH	43786	C	30-Aug-97	Allegheny	Columbus
Standard City	IL	62586	C	02-Oct-92	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Staffs Mills	WV	25279	E	06-Dec-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Steelsville	PA	19370	A	11-Apr-97	Allegheny	Lancaster
Steinsville	IN	47464	I	03-Oct-92	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Stirrat	WV	25545	I	01-Apr-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Stone	KY	41367	I	10-May-96	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Stonema	VA	24285	E	14-Feb-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Strange Creek	WV	26639	I	17-May-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Summerlee	WV	25931	E	01-Apr-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Swan River	MIN	55784	E	04-Dec-90	Midwest	Northland
Talbert	KY	41377	A	17-Dec-93	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Taplin	WV	25648	C	16-May-91	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tariff	WV	25281	C	22-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tefft	IN	46380	C	01-Mar-97	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Terešta	MO	65573	C	03-Oct-90	Midwest	Mid-America
Terry	WV	25934	C	08-Apr-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Thacker	WV	25694	I	27-Oct-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Theriot	LA	70397	I	01-Sep-89	Southwest	New Orleans
Thurmond	WV	25936	E	21-Jan-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Toda	PA	16685	C	26-Jan-86	Allegheny	Erie
Tomato	AR	72381	A	01-Aug-92	Southwest	Arkansas
Torbert	LA	70781	E	29-Dec-95	Southwest	New Orleans
Trammel	VA	24289	I	03-Apr-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Treese	KS	66778	A	05-Jan-96	Midwest	Mid-America
True	WV	25988	E	23-Jul-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tulahassee	OK	74466	E	03-Apr-95	Southwest	Oklahoma
Tunner Hill	IL	62991	A	14-Apr-89	Midwest	Gateway
Turin	IA	51059	E	04-Oct-96	Midwest	Hawkeye
Twin Branch	WV	24889	I	12-Jul-93	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Twist	AR	72385	C	21-Dec-85	Southwest	Arkansas
Ubersburg	PA	16361	I	18-May-96	Allegheny	Erie
Udall	MO	65766	B	12-Apr-95	Midwest	Mid-America
Unionport	OH	43966	E	14-Aug-92	Allegheny	Akron
Valley Fork	WV	25283	I	11-Jul-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Venturia	ND	58489	C	02-Aug-96	Midwest	Dakotas
Venda	LA	71481	A	16-Aug-96	Southwest	New Orleans
Village	VA	22570	C	01-Oct-84	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Village	AR	71753	E	15-May-92	Southwest	Arkansas
Viola	ID	83872	E	07-Feb-98	Western	Spokane
Volney	VA	24379	D	30-Sep-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Voss	TX	76688	B	31-Aug-88	Southwest	Ft Worth
Vulcan	WV	25697	C	30-Sep-92	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wadestown	WV	26589	I	04-Mar-94	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Walterville	WV	24984	E	30-May-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wakenda	MO	64687	C	01-Jul-93	Midwest	Mid-America
Walker Springs	AL	36586	I	02-Sep-88	Southeast	Alabama
Wardtown	VA	23482	C	05-Mar-93	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Watha	NC	28471	I	09-Nov-91	Mid-Atlantic	Mid-Carolinas
Watts Bar Dam	IN	37395	I	01-Oct-92	Southeast	Tennessee
Wattsville	VA	23483	E	24-Dec-86	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Waves	NC	27582	E	30-May-92	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Weisart	NE	68880	C	28-Nov-97	Midwest	Central Plains
Wenona	MD	21870	E	04-May-89	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
West Chesterfield	MA	01084	E	31-Dec-92	Northeast	Springfield

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED PRIOR TO MARCH 16, 1998

Post office	State	Zip Code	Level	Suspend date	Area	District
West Hatfield	MA	01038			Northeast	Springfield
West Tremont	ME	04690	11	03-Oct-97	Northeast	Maine
West Willow	PA	17583			Allegheny	Lancaster
Westfield	VT	05874	13	27-Sep-91	Northeast	Springfield
White Oak	SC	29176	C	03-Oct-92	Mid-Atlantic	Greater SC
Wile	WV	26641	C	19-Jul-96	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wingate	MD	21675		17-Jun-92	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Wolf Pen	WV	26896	11	31-Jan-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wonalancet	NH	03897	C	01-Sep-92	Northeast	New Hampshire
Woodman	WI	53827	11	16-Jun-95	Midwest	Milwaukee
Woodstock Valley	CT	06282	11	15-Nov-86	Northeast	Connecticut
Worm	WV	24897	11	25-Jul-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Worthville	PA	15784	C	27-Feb-93	Allegheny	Erie
Yukon	WV	24899	11	21-Jul-97	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Yukon	MO	65589	C	18-Nov-94	Midwest	Mid-America
Zanoni	VA	23191	C	26-Apr-96	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond

POST OFFICES SUSPENDED AFTER MARCH 16, 1998

Post Office State Zip Code Level Suspend date Area District

Adrian	OH	44801	C	11-Sep-98	Allegheny	Akron
Aice	AR	72610	C	03-Jul-98	Southwest	Arkansas
Anabel	MO	63431	E	23-Jul-99	Midwest	Gateway
Bissfield	OH	43805	C	20-Sep-98	Allegheny	Columbus
Blue Jay	WV	25816	11	31-Jul-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bordenland	WV	25665	11	21-Apr-99	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brar	MO	63931	A	15-Jan-99	Midwest	Mid-America
Bulford	WY	82052	C	01-Feb-99	Western	Denver
Cameron Mills	NY	14820	13	14-Nov-98	Northeast	Western New
Daiton	NY	14836	13	02-Feb-99	Northeast	Western New
Drayton Plains	MI	48330	15	15-Nov-98	Great Lakes	Royal Oak
Elymore	KS	66732	C	05-Dec-98	Midwest	Mid-America
Elton	WV	25965	C	09-Jul-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Elwood	IA	52226	E	02-Mar-99	Midwest	Hawkeye
Fort Mitchell	VA	23941	A	07-Aug-98	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Gibbonsville	ID	83463	C	16-Apr-99	Western	Spokane
Hamilton Dome	WY	82427	A	31-Oct-98	Western	Denver
Heimdon	WV	24726	13	01-Jan-99	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Isabon	WV	24846	11	18-May-99	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Killarney	FL	34740	13	08-Aug-98	Southeast	Central Florida
Lawrence	IL	62415	E	25-Sep-98	Midwest	Gateway
Littleport	IA	52055	C	18-Jun-99	Midwest	Hawkeye
Louisville	KS	66450	A	05-Jun-98	Midwest	Central Plains
Leveland	OK	73553	B	16-Nov-98	Southwest	Oklahoma
Marchand	PA	15758	C	30-May-98	Allegheny	Erie
McCabe	MT	59245	A	19-Jul-98	Western	Billings
Milam	WV	26838	E	31-Dec-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Masby	MO	64073	C	15-Aug-98	Midwest	Mid-America
Mount Alto	WV	25264	E	30-Sep-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
North Robinson	OH	44856	11	24-Apr-99	Allegheny	Akron
Norwood	MN	55368	15	16-Jan-99	Midwest	Northland
Ocean View	NJ	08230	18	05-Aug-99	Allegheny	South Jersey
Ogallah	KS	67656	A	08-Apr-99	Midwest	Central Plains
Opolis	KS	66760	C	02-Jul-99	Midwest	Mid-America
Ora	IN	46968	E	05-Sep-98	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Peoples	KY	40467	A	29-Jan-99	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Pemell	OK	73076	C	03-Jul-98	Southwest	Oklahoma
Pine Ridge	KY	41360	E	28-Nov-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Plainfield	GA	31073	E	14-Aug-98	Southeast	Macon
Prova	KY	42267	A	19-Jun-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Reads Landing	MN	55968	A	30-Jun-99	Midwest	Northland
Rumsey	KY	42371	C	24-Aug-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Salesville	OH	43778	E	02-Jan-99	Allegheny	Columbus
Savonburg	KS	66772	C	06-Jun-98	Midwest	Mid-America
Saxe	VA	23967	13	18-Mar-99	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Seibysville	WV	26236	E	30-Oct-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Serge	KY	40164	C	03-Aug-98	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Shafter	TX	79850	A	05-Feb-99	Southwest	San Antonio
Short Creek	OH	43989	C	09-Sep-98	Allegheny	Akron
Sierton	TN	38377	C	25-Feb-99	Southeast	Tennessee
Spencer	SD	57374	11	01-Jun-98	Midwest	Dakotas
Sweet Brar	VA	24595	11	16-Aug-99	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tibbie	AL	36583	11	05-Mar-99	Southeast	Alabama
Twig	MN	55791	11	01-Jul-98	Midwest	Northland
Village	AR	71768	A	23-Apr-99	Southwest	Arkansas
Water View	VA	23180	C	21-May-99	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
West Hartland	CT	06091	E	15-Jul-98	Northeast	Connecticut
Wileyville	WV	26186	11	11-Sep-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wilsendale	WV	25699	E	15-Mar-99	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Winterville	ME	04788	C	23-Apr-99	Northeast	Maine
Yalyn	WV	25654	11	07-Aug-98	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian



**Testimony of Richard Moe, President
National Trust for Historic Preservation
before the
Senate Governmental Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services
October 7, 1999**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation and Federal Services. I am pleased to present testimony on behalf of the National Trust for Historic Preservation at today's hearing regarding "Guidelines for the Relocation, Consolidation, or Construction of Post Offices."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's mission is "Protecting the Irreplaceable." In 1949, Congress chartered the National Trust as a private organization and charged the organization to lead the public/private effort to preserve our national heritage. The National Trust, with more than 270,000 members, provides leadership, education, and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and preserve and revitalize our communities.

Post offices in small towns and city centers across America are crucial to the continued viability of downtown businesses and to the communities in which they are located. Not only does the Post Office serve as an anchor tenant for downtown business districts, it also frequently occupies structures that are unique to the character of these communities. Many of these facilities are in historic districts. Decisions to close, consolidate, or relocate post offices too often do not consider the economic impact of such decisions on the local community.

During the early 1990s, Iowa communities participating in the National Trust's Main Street program conducted surveys that showed 80 percent of the consumers who shopped downtown did so because of access to the post office. Our National Main Street Center, which has worked in nearly 1,500 communities since 1980, helps revive neglected and abandoned downtown commercial districts by providing local groups with organization, design, economic restructuring and marketing assistance. The program has helped create 47,000 new businesses and 174,000 new jobs, and has resulted in the rehabilitation of more than 60,000 buildings. The success of this program hinges on our ability to stabilize core downtown corridors, and post offices are vital to these business centers.

Protecting the Irreplaceable



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202.588.6000 • FAX: 202.588.6038 • TTY: 202.588.6200 • WWW.NATIONALTRUST.ORG

The issue of post office closings became one of our top priorities three years ago after we were contacted by city council members about the closing of an 80-year-old downtown post office in Livingston, Montana. The post office is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. City officials received thirty days notice before a proposed move out of town. Local citizens decided to fight back because the closing threatened the economy and character of the community's downtown.

When we looked into the facts in the Livingston, Montana case, the Trust learned that the U.S. Postal Service considered itself exempt from federal Executive Orders 12072 and 13006 and from the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act of 1976. These directives require federal agencies to first consider locating in downtown or historic locales before considering outlying areas. In December 1996, the New York Times published an article about the Livingston Post Office closing, and within months the National Trust was contacted by scores of local officials and residents from across the country concerned with post office closings in their communities and states. Like the Livingston, Montana case, each of these post office closings involved a proposed relocation from the downtown to a site near a major highway on the outskirts of town.

If calls to the National Trust can be viewed as a barometer on post office closings, the trend of closings appeared to be occurring at an alarming rate. In March of 1997, the General Accounting Office issued a report, "U.S. Postal Service: Information on Post Office Closures, Appeals, and Affected Communities" (GGD-97-38BR). The report did not identify any unusual closing trends. However, the National Trust continued to receive multiple reports -- at least two calls a week -- about closings from communities around the country. Many of these stories are documented in local newspaper articles. We could not understand the discrepancy between the data in the GAO report, and the increasing reports of post office closings brought to the Trust's attention.

Following a meeting with USPS officials in March 1997, we learned that the U.S. Postal Service viewed de facto closings -- those that occur because of an expansion, relocation or construction of a post office at a new site -- as different from a post office closing where service is ended. The National Trust took issue with this view. While federal law and regulations govern how the Postal Service must handle closings and consolidations, neither statute nor regulation covered de facto closings. Through the efforts of Senators Max Baucus and James Jeffords, and Representative Earl Blumenauer, legislation was introduced to respond to this problem.

The U.S. Postal Service reacted to the national press reports on closings, the National Trust's inquiries, and threatened congressional action by first issuing new community relations guidelines. Next, it declared a moratorium on closings. Finally, the USPS implemented a new rule on October 5, 1998, which established specific community contact regulations for expansion or relocation of an existing postal facility, or for construction of a new facility (39 CFR Part 241). The community relations regulations implementing this new rule were published in May 1999, but are still not widely available to the public.

The October 1998 USPS regulations, while a step in the right direction, do not do enough to insure adequate community consultation and involvement. They also set a different consultation standard for relocations than for closings. The Post Office Community Partnership Act (S. 556/H.R. 670) would correct this and other problems by establishing the same requirements for relocations and expansions as now exist for closings and consolidations:

- The Postal Service regulations only require a seven-day period after public officials and the community are notified of an expansion, relocation, or construction of a new post office before holding a public hearing. It is unrealistic for a community to truly engage the Postal Service during the seven-day period now available to develop alternatives to a closing that would result from a relocation. Following the public hearing, USPS has 15 days to consider the views of residents before making a final determination. The proposed legislation would give communities 60 days to respond to all closings, regardless of cause.
- The regulations do not require public meetings when the meetings will result in delays considered too burdensome for the post office. In these circumstances, USPS can simply send notification cards to the public about the closing. The legislation requires public hearings under all circumstances except emergencies.
- The regulations allow the USPS to permanently close a post office using "emergency" procedures. The legislation would limit an emergency closure to 180 days, after which the Postmaster General must comply with closing procedures under the legislation.
- The regulations do not require compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) unless the USPS determines it is not burdened by compliance. The proposed legislation requires compliance with the NHPA for closings, consolidations and relocations.
- The regulations do not require compliance with local zoning and building codes, while the proposed legislation would create this requirement. The USPS, like other businesses, can seek variances based on procedures established in each community. The USPS has the staff and experience to apply for these waivers, perhaps more resources than most of the businesses and individuals that might apply. USPS should not be exempt from local land use laws.
- Communities would have the right to appeal decisions on expansions, relocations and new construction proposals to the Postal Rate Commission as they now have for closings and consolidations. Appeals on relocations now stop at the Vice President for Facilities of the USPS.

In recent months, the National Trust has been contacted by the communities of Demopolis, Alabama; Cedar Key, Florida; Woodland, Washington; Grand Ledge, Michigan; Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania; Batesville, Arkansas; Plymouth, New Hampshire; Ball Ground, Georgia; Tallahassee, Florida; and others. The common thread

in these communities is not just the post office closing, but the fact that each community was forced to respond very quickly to USPS real estate decisions. The USPS decides to close and relocate a facility and only then is the community notified. There is virtually no community involvement when the post office makes its initial determination. It is clear that in many, if not most cases, the USPS makes preliminary decisions about relocations and closings and only then talks to those affected.

In part, these decisions are made because of a congressional mandate under the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970. This Act required the new, independent government agency formed in 1971 to become financially self-supporting. Closing post offices is part of the USPS's effort to act more like a private corporation.

The decisions the Postal Service makes as a quasi-private corporation for closings and de facto closings too often lead to choices that ignore the economic impacts on local communities, but also ignore local land use laws and building codes, in favor of the most economical construction and facility locations. A consistent pattern has emerged in post office closings. USPS usually makes a closing decision based solely on economic considerations. It highlights a specific problem, such as limited use of a facility, limited facility or parking space, or temporary structural problems to help make its case to close a facility. The postal service then announces plans to build a new facility off the main highway that encompasses sorting, distribution, vehicle maintenance, retail and other operations. These "cookie cutter" decisions can often mean economic devastation for downtowns.

We recognize the space and equipment requirement for efficient handling and delivering of the mail. However, by requiring post offices to fit into this mold, the USPS has created a blueprint for damaging city centers. A better model would be to work with the local community to find workable solutions to the problems faced by community post offices.

Locating and keeping federal facilities in the downtowns can be good for everyone's bottom line. The U.S. General Services Administration's Public Buildings Service (PBS) has just released a new study titled "Financing Historic Federal Buildings." The PBS is responsible for 8,000 owned and leased federal buildings. Among the study findings, the PBS determined that "many historic buildings were designed to be monumental and to last for over 100 years. These buildings represented the federal government and the communities they were located in." The report also stated that "The combined operating costs for historic buildings are 57 cents less per rentable square foot than non-historic buildings..., and are 40 cents less per usable square foot to operate." In addition, the study finds that older buildings take less funding out of the Federal Buildings Fund compared to newer buildings. The report concludes that "Many federal buildings have a prestige or "flagship" value in their community. They are usually places that are well known to the local community." While the report concluded that many historic buildings do not provide sufficient space for operations, it also recognized the need for the federal government to maintain smaller facilities in order to "remain competitive with the private sector."

USPS's actions often ignore language included in the 1976 amendments to the Postal Reorganization Act that requires the USPS to "consider the effect on the community" of closings and consolidations. To our knowledge, regulations have never been implemented that would require the USPS to study the economic impact of its actions on downtowns.

There are no easy solutions for balancing the needs of the Postal Service and the needs of the communities, but the Postal Service has proven that it is not yet serious about community contact procedures. We must hold the USPS to a higher standard. Congress should outline minimum community contact procedures that apply to the relocation and new construction of post offices, not just to closings, as under current law. Before the Postal Service makes a major post office change, they should be required to consider such factors as:

- the effect on the community served, including its downtown business area;
- the level of community opposition to the move; and
- the adequacy of the existing post office, and whether all reasonable options have been explored.

Further, USPS should be required to comply with local building laws and preservation ordinances that are decided on by local communities to prevent environmental damage or the demolition of a historic structure to make way for a parking lot.

The Post Office Community Partnership Act is not intended to prevent the U.S. Postal Service from closing a facility. It is intended to ensure a thoughtful, deliberate process that provides an established response for the Postal Service, and protections from arbitrary and de facto closings for the community. The legislation provides a legal tool for communities to use when they believe the process has not been followed.

Local governments should know that there are protections in place that recognize the importance of Post Offices to the community. Codifying these protections through S. 556 and H.R. 670 will ensure fewer arbitrary post office closings, consolidations, relocations or moves to newly constructed facilities. It will also ensure that as future Postal Administrations come and go there is an established process for making these decisions that can only be altered by an act of Congress.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is joined by the National Governors Association, the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Postmasters of the United States, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, Preservation Action, the International Downtown Association, and the American Planning Association in support of S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act, and its House companion, H.R. 670.

Over the last three years, I have learned a great deal about the importance of local post offices to their communities. I have also been struck by the lack of good

information on the impact of decisions to relocate these facilities. In addition to passing this legislation, I have another recommendation for this committee. In conjunction with the National Trust's Main Street program, you may want to study the statistical impact of closings and de facto closings on communities. The study should look at factors such as USPS compliance with local land use laws and building codes, and whether USPS follows its statutory and regulatory requirements for community contact procedures. It should also examine the direct financial impact of these closings on the community, which is a subject that has never been formally studied.

Thank you for allowing me to share the views of the National Trust for Historic Preservation on this important subject.

**STATEMENT OF
EDWARD J. DERWINSKI
LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT, NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POSTMASTERS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, PROLIFERATION, AND
FEDERAL SERVICES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
OCTOBER 7, 1999**

On behalf of the National League of Postmasters of the United States I thank you for allowing us to testify on the S. 556 – the “Post Office Partnership Act.”

The Postal Service has made a very substantial effort to develop new agreements on closing/relocations and consolidations of Post Offices. We are working to see that the improvement in the performance of the Postal Service continues since this in the best interest of the American Public – the customers of the Postal Service. As you know formal regulations, published in the Federal Register, have been effect since October 1998.

As a basic principle we are always concerned when closing and consolidations of Post Offices are contemplated. We are dedicated to serving the public and expect location adjustments to be clearly in the public interest.

Proponents of this legislation believe that it will cause fewer small post offices to be closed. This is highly unlikely. This legislation would barely change the already rigorous process for closing post offices. The Postal Service's moratorium on closings also makes the impact of this legislation on small offices negligible.

We are very concerned with the provisions that "anyone" can appeal a decision to the Postal Rate Commission. Clearly this would cause considerable delays. The public interest would not be properly served under these conditions. Also, it should be noted that the Rate Commission is not really structured to undertake this workload.

The League is also concerned that provisions in this proposal run seem counter to changes dictated by O.S.H.A problems. This would create obvious legal clashes, deadlocking not solving the conflicts.

The League feels that the Postal Service has faced up to responsibilities, which prompted this legislative proposal. Therefore, this proposal amounts to a legislative "overkill" which would not serve the mail users in this arena of improving customer facilities. It will create more problems than it is designed to solve. Instead of taking this excessive, highly regulatory approach, let us allow the Postal Service's more reasonable new community guidelines to work for America.

**Statement of
Rudolph K. Umscheid
Vice President, Facilities, United States Postal Service
before the
Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and
Federal Services
Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
October 7, 1999**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee. I welcome the opportunity to talk to you about how the Postal Service provides the facilities which make it possible to offer a high level of service to the American people and ensure a safe working environment for our employees.

The Postal Service continues to work with the local community on postal facility issues. And, while I understand the concerns which gave rise to the legislation, I also want to share with the Committee why the Postal Service feels that it will be detrimental to the Postal Service and the communities we serve.

The Postal Service is one of the nation's largest owners and managers of real estate, with over 37,500 buildings containing 310 million square feet of space. Our facilities handle 630 million pieces of mail every day. Mail volume has doubled in the past 20 years. For the first time in history, we will handle more than 200 billion pieces of mail this year. This volume growth, coupled with population growth, strains the capacity of our facilities. Even in areas of little or no growth, we must address issues relating to deteriorating conditions from decades of use, as well as the need to upgrade offices when employee safety, accessibility, and other problems are identified. In an attempt to keep pace with this need, we have an annual construction budget of \$1.5 to \$2 billion, which is a significant investment in communities throughout the nation. We complete more than 20,000 repair and alteration projects and 800 new or replacement facilities each year.

The Postal Service recognizes the pivotal role our postal facilities play in towns and cities across the country, and we understand why our customers feel that their local post office is an integral part of their community. We are sensitive to these concerns

and want to ensure that those served by a postal facility have input into decisions that could affect their community.

We believe we have improved our performance in this area during the past two years, first with a revised policy in 1997, and then with formal regulations, which were published in the *Federal Register*, and took effect in October 1998.

Do we have a perfect record? No, we do not. But I think our record is a very good one, one that is better than isolated press clippings and anecdotal stories might indicate.

Our regulations require that we meet with local officials and hold a public meeting at the start of our process, before any decisions have been made. We explain how our process works, including the time frame for comments, decisions, and appeals, using the *Community Relations Regulations* handbook during discussions with local officials and a convenient brochure to hand out at public hearings, so that our customers understand how they can participate.

Our first priority is to remain in existing locations. In fact, since September 1997, we have completed over 200 projects, in which we have either expanded the existing post office or moved the carrier operation to another location, thus keeping the retail in its existing location. We have 250 similar projects in progress, and over 150 are in the initial planning phase.

If it is not feasible to expand the existing facility, our second alternative is to remain in the same vicinity. If no buildings or sites are available, only then will we seek alternatives that may be out of the downtown area. We also keep the community informed at every step of the process. And, anyone not satisfied with the process can appeal to me.

In the year since these regulations have been in effect, I have received fewer than 30 appeals. I get personally involved in these cases. Some involve a disappointed owner of a site not selected. Some involve a wide difference in opinion within the community as to the best location. Even with our preference for keeping the facilities in or near their existing locations, there are some members of the community who want the post office to be nearer their homes and where they shop on a daily basis, so that they can combine trips. In several appeals, I was able to work with the local community to find a solution acceptable to them. Such solutions are not always easy, nor are they fast. In one particular situation, working with the mayor, we eventually were able to identify and assemble a site consisting of

eight separate parcels. And, in some, I upheld the original decision the Postal Service had made as being the right decision because nothing else would resolve the facility problem.

We also are working on a number of efforts to improve how we work with communities and how we can remain in the downtown area. We have developed a training program for our real estate specialists to improve their skills in handling public meetings. We have prepared and issued samples of all notices and correspondence relating to this process so that all of our real estate professionals follow the policy. In an effort to improve the likelihood that we can find alternate space in the general vicinity of existing offices, we have relaxed our requirements for parking in downtown areas, and can sometimes reduce our interior space requirements in those communities that are not expected to experience high growth. We work with communities on the exterior design of the facility, so that it blends in with the character of the community, and with State Historic Preservation Offices when we renovate or expand older facilities. My office also follows up on press clippings that may indicate there is a problem or controversy brewing.

With that background, I'd now like to turn to the proposed legislation. While it is well intended, in that it certainly emphasizes input from those served by a postal facility, we believe that it does not serve the public or our employees.

First, S. 556 treats post office relocations or new construction—which are replacements of the existing office—in the same manner as post office closings or consolidations, where there will be no postal facility in the ZIP Code area. The very deliberate and lengthy process used when we consider closing a postal facility takes, on average, two years from the time we begin the process until a final decision is made, and sometimes longer if the Postal Rate Commission sends the case back for additional data. The legislation proposes a process for a relocation or new construction that would take up to 18 months or longer for a decision, before a site can be purchased, or before any construction can begin. This is not acceptable when we are unable to continue leasing the current facility, or when the existing facility is in poor condition, which can pose serious safety concerns for our employees and customers. It also poses a problem when severe space shortages exist, which can cause safety and service problems or prevent the installation of modern equipment. In addition, it is unlikely that we would be able to

control a proposed site for a relocated post office or new construction for that period of time. Thus, even after gaining approval, we might have to start again with a new site.

Second, we do not feel that it is prudent to legislate processes requiring judgment decisions. In many cases, we deal with communities that cannot reach consensus on where the facility should be located. The legislation requires that “consideration” be given to community input, but does not allow us to go with the majority input. The legislation states that all “reasonable” alternatives must be fully evaluated, yet “reasonable” means different things to different people. In effect, the legislation is simply inviting controversy and lengthy review—not by the community served, but by the Postal Rate Commission.

Third, our regulations provide for more input and discussions with the community, and this takes place at the start of the process. Conversely, the legislation proposes that we get public comments after we announce our decision, and hold a community meeting only if asked. This does not foster the partnership we are trying to create.

Fourth, anyone can appeal our decision to the Postal Rate Commission. It does not matter if local officials and 99.9 percent of the community endorse our decision; an appeal can go forward, delaying a much-needed project for an extended period.

Fifth, over the past decade, we have modified our community relations policies, strengthening the requirements each time, but also making changes as we gained experience and saw what worked best—providing notification cards to all customers or holding community meetings, deciding when to hold a public hearing, establishing a period of time between actions in the process, and providing appeal rights. A legislated process will not allow these types of evolving improvements to be easily incorporated into our procedures.

Finally, the bill would require the Postal Service to comply with all local zoning and building codes. In the past year or so, we have increased our efforts to work with local zoning boards and city offices, and we now voluntarily comply with most zoning. In addition, we have a long-standing requirement to construct our facilities to the more stringent of national and local codes. However, some building codes, such as those requiring public bathrooms in public lobbies, fire sprinklers that could damage the mail, and handicapped accessibility in our Inspection Service lookout galleries, pose undue hardships on the Postal Service. In fact, some code requirements could increase

our space needs to an extent that we could not locate in the downtown area. We need the flexibility to resolve issues with the local community.

In summary, we have made great strides in working with these communities on our facility decisions. And, I believe our recent record is very positive, with a few exceptions, issues that we continue to address as they become known. The proposed legislation will cause undue delays in resolving facility issues, which will add costs to the process. In addition, it will delay projects to such an extent that we will not be able to make the same level of investment in these facilities each year. This in turn will affect the communities and the hundreds of small businesses that perform the construction work for us. It will also allow safety problems to linger.

The Postal Service feels very strongly, and I cannot emphasize this enough, that the legislation would have a devastating impact on our ability to provide much needed facilities to serve everyone, everywhere, every day and at a reasonable price.

This concludes my testimony.

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Post Offices Emergency Suspended Before March 16, 1998

Post Office	STATE	ZIP Code	Level	Suspend Date	Area	District
Abington	CT	06230	13	12/28/1991	Northeast	Connecticut
Adrian	IL	62310	C	07/24/1992	Midwest	Gateway
Akers	LA	70421	B	08/01/1991	Southwest	New Orleans
Alabama	NY	14003	11	07/17/1987	Northeast	Western New York
Alba	PA	16910	C	09/10/1996	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Ameagle	WV	25004	E	10/29/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Amherst	SD	57421	C	07/28/1997	Midwest	Dakotas
Amsden	OH	44803	E	06/26/1997	Allegheny	Akron
Arborvale	WV	24915	11	02/19/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Ashland	WV	24810	11	09/25/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Atwater	IL	62511	C	08/06/1987	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Aultman	PA	15713	11	12/30/1988	Allegheny	Erie
Auto	WV	24917	B	05/01/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Azalia	MI	48110		06/18/1988	Great Lakes	Detroit
Bakers Summit	PA	16614	E	03/24/1989	Allegheny	Erie
Bakersville	OH	43803	C	12/19/1997	Allegheny	Columbus
Bald Knob	WV	25010	11	09/03/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Ballengee	WV	24919	C	09/28/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Barnhill	IL	62809	E	12/19/1986	Midwest	Gateway
Bayou Goula	LA	70716	11	02/02/1992	Southwest	New Orleans
Bebe	TX	78603	D	06/01/1996	Southwest	San Antonio
Bee	VA	24217	11	05/28/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Beeson	WV	24714	E	03/29/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bellamy	VA	23017	11	02/28/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Belvidere Center	VT	05442		07/31/1987	Northeast	Springfield
Bendavis	MO	65433	A	06/26/1992	Midwest	Mid-America
Benge	WA	99105	D	11/17/1997	Western	Spokane
Bennington	NH	03442	13	11/07/1990	Northeast	New Hampshire
Bens Run	WV	26135	E	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bentree	WV	25018	11	09/29/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Berea	WV	26327	A	04/14/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Berkshire	MA	01224	11	05/18/1988	Northeast	Springfield
Beulah	MO	65436	C	11/17/1995	Midwest	Mid-America
Birdeye	AR	72314	C	08/30/1997	Southwest	Arkansas
Blackwell	MO	63626	A	11/21/1997	Midwest	Mid-America
Blanch	NC	27212	C	11/16/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Blandville	WV	26328	A	06/14/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Blanks	LA	70717	C	03/24/1995	Southwest	New Orleans
Booth	WV	26522	11	04/12/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Boswell	AR	72516	B	12/25/1996	Southwest	Arkansas
Branch	WI	54203		12/30/1983	Midwest	Milwaukee
Branchton	PA	16021	A	08/07/1995	Allegheny	Erie
Brandy Camp	PA	15822	C	09/17/1993	Allegheny	Erie
Bridgewater	MI	48115		02/28/1993	Great Lakes	Detroit
Bristol	WV	26332	13	08/23/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brohard	WV	26138	C	03/28/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Brownnton	WV	26334	E	06/28/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Bruington	VA	23023	C	08/04/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond

Post Offices Emergency Suspended Before March 16, 1998

Post Office	STATE	ZIP Code	Level	Suspend Date	Area	District
Bueche	LA	70720	11	12/28/1990	Southwest	New Orleans
Burnside	IL	62318	C	02/16/1996	Midwest	Gateway
Burnt Corn	AL	36431	C	04/07/1997	Southeast	Alabama
Burt	NY	14028	13	06/06/1997	Northeast	Western New York
Buskirk	NY	12028	11	05/15/1997	Northeast	Albany
Cache	IL	62913	E	11/26/1986	Midwest	Gateway
Camp Dix	KY	41127	C	11/29/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Capels	WV	24820	11	08/30/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Caplinger Mills	MO	65607	B	11/03/1995	Midwest	Mid-America
Caretta	WV	24821	11	06/06/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Carey	TX	79222	C	04/28/1989	Southwest	Ft Worth
Carlisle	LA	70042	11	12/31/1992	Southwest	New Orleans
Carter	SD	57580		11/22/1985	Midwest	Dakotas
Cartersburg	IN	46114	E	01/03/1991	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Cayuse	OR	97821	C	12/22/1986	Western	Portland
Cedar City	MO	65022	13	02/04/1994	Midwest	Gateway
Center Point	WV	26339	E	07/22/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Central Station	WV	26340		09/20/1982	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Centralia	PA	17927	11	09/17/1994	Allegheny	Lancaster
Centralia	WV	26612	C	08/28/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Chalk	TX	79224		11/04/1985	Southwest	Ft Worth
Cisco	KY	41410	A	02/27/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Clay	TX	77839		12/07/1988	Southwest	Houston
Climax	PA	16216	A	10/03/1992	Allegheny	Erie
Clio	WV	25046	E	07/28/1989	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Coalwood	WV	24824	11	11/22/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Colcord	WV	25048	11	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
College City	CA	95931	C	01/05/1998	Pacific	Sacramento
Conran	MO	63838	C	07/31/1992	Midwest	Mid-America
Cook Station	MO	65449	E	03/21/1997	Midwest	Mid-America
Cooksville	MD	21723	11	03/30/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Core	WV	26529	11	07/30/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Cove Gap	WV	25509		02/29/1984	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Cowlesville	NY	14037	13	10/14/1995	Northeast	Western New York
Coyville	KS	66727	A	06/30/1996	Midwest	Mid-America
Creola	OH	45622	11	05/15/1992	Allegheny	Columbus
Crichton	WV	25961	C	10/18/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Crumpler	WV	24825	11	01/15/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Dabolt	KY	40421	A	03/18/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Davant	LA	70046	11	03/31/1989	Southwest	New Orleans
Davis Wharf	VA	23345	C	05/08/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Delancey	NY	13752	13	10/29/1993	Northeast	Albany
Delaware	IA	52036	C	02/09/1998	Midwest	Hawkeye
Denver	KY	41215	D	01/02/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Deyoung	PA	16728	A	05/14/1993	Allegheny	Erie
Drury	MO	65638	11	01/10/1997	Midwest	Mid-America
Eagle Rock	NC	27523	C	12/30/1988	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
East Berkshire	VT	05447		08/30/1985	Northeast	Springfield

Post Offices Emergency Suspended Before March 16, 1998

Post Office	STATE	ZIP Code	Level	Suspend Date	Area	District
East Hebron	NH	03232	11	10/22/1994	Northeast	New Hampshire
East Pharsalia	NY	13758	E	04/30/1997	Northeast	Albany
Echo	UT	84024	C	05/27/1993	Western	Salt Lake City
Edmon	PA	15630	E	10/31/1994	Allegheny	Pittsburgh
Edmund	WI	53535	C	08/01/1995	Midwest	Milwaukee
Edwardsville	VA	22456	11	11/26/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Elba	ID	83326	C	01/20/1996	Western	Spokane
Elderon	WI	54429	E	06/01/1995	Midwest	Milwaukee
Eldersville	PA	15036	E	12/30/1995	Allegheny	Pittsburgh
Elgin	AZ	85611		06/27/1987	Western	Phoenix
Ellery	IL	62833		11/30/1985	Midwest	Gateway
Elm Springs	SD	57736		06/29/1984	Midwest	Dakotas
Elm Springs	SD	57791		06/30/1984	Midwest	Dakotas
Elmira	WV	26618	A	04/19/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
English	WV	24832	11	07/05/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Entrioken	PA	16638	E	09/18/1992	Allegheny	Erie
Estcourt Station	ME	04741	A	10/02/1995	Northeast	Maine
Everettville	WV	26533	E	09/30/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Fairfield	ND	58627	E	02/20/1998	Midwest	Dakotas
Fanrock	WV	24834	E	11/05/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Fife	VA	23054	E	07/27/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Finly	IN	46129	E	11/30/1990	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Floyd Dale	SC	29542	11	01/03/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Columbia
Fort Spring	WV	24936	11	05/31/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Foster	NE	68737	C	10/24/1997	Midwest	Central Plains
Fox	OR	97831	C	11/14/1997	Western	Portland
Freeman	WV	24724	13	08/07/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Fruitvale	ID	83620	E	12/27/1996	Western	Spokane
Ft. Defiance	VA	24437	C	08/30/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Fullerton	LA	70642	C	02/21/1992	Southwest	New Orleans
Fulton	KS	66738	A	01/06/1998	Midwest	Mid-America
Gapland	MD	21736	11	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Garrison	MD	21055		01/29/1988	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Garrison	MO	65657	A	10/20/1995	Midwest	Mid-America
Garvin	MN	56132	A	10/02/1992	Midwest	Northland
Gerlaw	IL	61435	D	12/31/1989	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Gheens	LA	70355	11	11/30/1990	Southwest	New Orleans
Gilmer	WV	26350	D	06/30/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glace	WV	24942	A	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glad Valley	SD	57629	C	04/25/1997	Midwest	Dakotas
Glasgo	CT	06337	E	01/01/1993	Northeast	Connecticut
Glen Morgan	WV	25847	13	02/28/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glenhayes	WV	25519	A	05/06/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Glover	MO	63646	11	12/31/1991	Midwest	Mid-America
Godeffroy	NY	12739	11	02/28/1990	New York Metro	Westchester
Goldbond	VA	24094	11	02/01/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Goodson	MO	65659	11	09/03/1991	Midwest	Mid-America
Gordon	OH	45329	11	08/31/1993	Allegheny	Cincinnati

Post Offices Emergency Suspended Before March 16, 1998

Post Office	STATE	ZIP Code	Level	Suspend Date	Area	District
Gowen City	PA	17828	E	10/29/1994	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Grassflat	PA	16839	11	08/31/1994	Allegheny	Erie
Grassy	MO	63753	C	11/15/1991	Midwest	Mid-America
Grays River	WA	98621	11	01/20/1996	Western	Portland
Green Park	PA	17031	E	08/31/1996	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Grimms Landing	WV	25095	C	01/08/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Gumberry	NC	27838	E	03/12/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Gunlock	UT	84733	C	11/13/1995	Western	Salt Lake City
Hadley	KY	42235	A	10/14/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Haldeman	KY	40329	D	01/02/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Hamberg	ND	58337	C	11/09/1996	Midwest	Dakotas
Hamlet	NE	69031	D	01/31/1997	Midwest	Central Plains
Hampden	WV	25623	11	08/09/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Harman	VA	24618	11	11/18/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Hatfield	MN	56164	A	05/20/1989	Midwest	Northland
Hatton	AR	71946	E	10/26/1993	Southwest	Arkansas
Havaco	WV	24841	E	09/28/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Hazelton	WV	26535	C	12/22/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Henryton	MD	21080		03/02/1982	DC Metro	Baltimore
Herald	IL	62845	A	02/13/1998	Midwest	Gateway
Herrick Center	PA	18430	C	02/19/1984	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Hetland	SD	57244	C	12/10/1997	Midwest	Dakotas
Hillisburg	IN	46046	C	07/01/1992	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Hines	WV	25967	11	05/07/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Holabird	SD	57540	C	10/03/1992	Midwest	Dakotas
Holden	UT	84636	11	03/29/1993	Western	Salt Lake City
Holder	IL	61746	C	12/06/1985	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Homer	IN	46146	C	07/10/1995	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Horton	MO	64751	11	08/16/1996	Midwest	Mid-America
Howell	AR	72071	A	03/23/1985	Southwest	Arkansas
Huntly	VA	22640	E	01/10/1992	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Huntsville	IL	62344	C	04/27/1996	Midwest	Gateway
Idewild	TN	38346	C	05/23/1997	Southeast	Tennessee
Ijamsville	MD	21754		12/06/1985	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Independence	WV	26374	13	12/04/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Industrial	WV	26375	E	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Iona, SD	SD	57542	A	11/04/1983	Midwest	Dakotas
Ivyton	KY	41444	A	01/03/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Jamaica	VA	23079	E	06/18/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Jenkins Bridge	VA	23399	C	03/05/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Jennie	AR	71649	E	11/02/1991	Southwest	Arkansas
Jodie	WV	26674	E	01/23/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Jonben	WV	25856	E	03/18/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Junction	WV	26824	C	01/30/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Juneau	PA	15751	C	03/31/1988	Allegheny	Erie
Justiceburg	TX	79330	C	05/30/1997	Southwest	Ft Worth
Kanawha Falls	WV	25115	C	04/28/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kantner	PA	15548	E	09/30/1992	Allegheny	Erie

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Kempster	WI	54444	C	10/18/1993	Midwest	Milwaukee
Keystone	WV	24852	13	11/25/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kieffer	WV	24950	C	02/28/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Killona	LA	70066	13	11/01/1989	Southwest	New Orleans
Kilsyth	WV	25859	11	06/27/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Kirkland	TX	79238	A	09/02/1983	Southwest	Ft Worth
Knoxville	MD	21758	15	08/24/1987	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Knoxville	GA	31050	11	10/02/1992	Southeast	Macon
Kohler	WI	53044	18	10/01/1984	Midwest	Milwaukee
Kopperston	WV	24854	11	06/23/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Labarre	LA	70751	D	08/27/1993	Southwest	New Orleans
Lakewood	IL	62438	11	03/10/1995	Midwest	Gateway
Lakin	WV	25250	11	07/26/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lawrenceville	NY	12949	13	12/15/1993	Northeast	Albany
Leander	KY	41228	E	01/03/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Leckie	WV	24856	E	10/04/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lecoma	MO	65540	C	05/01/1990	Midwest	Mid-America
Lee City	KY	41342	C	01/03/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Leewood	WV	25122	E	05/17/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lefor	ND	58641	E	11/01/1996	Midwest	Dakotas
Lenox	AL	36454	C	09/18/1992	Southeast	Alabama
Lenox	MO	65541	C	10/10/1997	Midwest	Mid-America
Leon	VA	22725	E	03/29/1996	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Leon Junction	TX	76552	C	10/02/1992	Southwest	San Antonio
Levels	WV	25431		10/16/1981	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Linden	WV	25256	C	03/16/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Lindseyville	KY	42257	C	08/29/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Linwood	MD	21764	11	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Listie	PA	15549	11	12/31/1992	Allegheny	Erie
Lockney	WV	25258	C	12/15/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Long Valley	SD	57547	E	03/02/1990	Midwest	Dakotas
Loretto	VA	22509	C	06/18/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Ludell	KS	67744	A	04/05/1995	Midwest	Central Plains
Ludlow	SD	57755	C	07/21/1995	Midwest	Dakotas
Luebbering	MO	63061	C	03/01/1996	Midwest	Gateway
Lynchburg	MO	65543	E	03/29/1996	Midwest	Mid-America
Maben	WV	25870	11	09/08/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Macksburg	OH	45746	11	08/02/1997	Allegheny	Columbus
Macon	VA	23101	C	06/04/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Madison Mills	VA	22953	11	04/13/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Maher	CO	81421	C	02/26/1988	Western	Denver
Mansfield Depot	CT	06251	13	01/17/1997	Northeast	Connecticut
Martin	ND	58758	C	11/22/1996	Midwest	Dakotas
Massies Mill	VA	22954	C	09/16/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Maysfield	TX	76555	C	10/02/1992	Southwest	San Antonio
McClurg	MO	65701	C	12/10/1993	Midwest	Mid-America
McCoy	TX	78053	A	03/27/1996	Southwest	San Antonio
Meador	WV	25682	11	02/13/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian

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Meadow Bluff	WV	24958	C	10/02/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Meadows	NH	03587	D	12/02/1988	Northeast	New Hampshire
Meckling	SD	57044	C	11/14/1997	Midwest	Dakotas
Medley	WV	26734	A	04/30/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Melrose	CT	06049	11	03/31/1990	Northeast	Connecticut
Mentle	PA	15761	C	05/29/1992	Allegheny	Erie
Midnight	MS	39115	11	11/22/1996	Southeast	Mississippi
Miguon	PA	19452	11	10/13/1995	Allegheny	Lancaster
Mission Ridge	SD	57557	A	01/31/1989	Midwest	Dakotas
Miston	TN	38056		07/31/1985	Southeast	Tennessee
Modeste	LA	70376	11	10/02/1992	Southwest	New Orleans
Modestown	VA	23412		11/18/1988	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Moko	AR	72557	C	05/14/1993	Southwest	Arkansas
Monaville	WV	25636	13	03/18/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Moscow	VT	05662	11	12/01/1990	Northeast	Springfield
Mountain	WV	26407	A	11/08/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Mt. Dora	NM	88429	C	04/01/1997	Western	Albuquerque
Munday	WV	26152	C	06/26/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Munson	PA	16860	C	10/26/1984	Allegheny	Erie
Munsonville	NH	03457	11	11/30/1989	Northeast	New Hampshire
Mustoe	VA	24468	E	08/28/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Nebraska	IN	47262	A	01/04/1994	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
New Gulf	TX	77462	13	03/31/1994	Southwest	Houston
New Lisbon	NY	13415	E	10/13/1995	Northeast	Albany
Newell	AL	36270	A	12/11/1992	Southeast	Alabama
Nisbet	PA	17759	C	08/28/1992	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Noble	MO	65713	A	01/09/1998	Midwest	Mid-America
Nolan	WV	25687	11	12/15/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Norway	OR	97460	11	11/01/1991	Western	Portland
Oasis	UT	84650	C	08/30/1997	Western	Salt Lake City
Ohley	WV	25147	11	04/26/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Ophlem	IL	61468	C	11/30/1990	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Oswegatchie	NY	13670	E	02/15/1993	Northeast	Albany
Otter Creek	ME	04665	11	07/10/1997	Northeast	Maine
Otto	TX	76675	11	10/02/1992	Southwest	San Antonio
Ovapa	WV	25150	E	06/13/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Owanka	SD	57767		10/01/1982	Midwest	Dakotas
Ozone	TN	37842	C	03/13/1991	Southeast	Tennessee
Page	WV	25152	11	04/22/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Parade	SD	57623		09/01/1989	Midwest	Dakotas
Paris	VA	22130	E	03/31/1991	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Pascola	MO	63871	E	10/02/1992	Midwest	Mid-America
Penn	ND	58362	C	10/25/1996	Midwest	Dakotas
Penrod	KY	42365	C	08/26/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Perkins	WV	26634	B	10/26/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Perry	TX	76677	C	06/30/1992	Southwest	San Antonio
Petrey	AL	36062	E	03/18/1994	Southeast	Alabama
Petroleum	WV	26161	11	06/15/1987	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian

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Pisgah	MD	20640		07/31/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Capital
Pleasantville	TN	37147	E	05/30/1986	Southeast	Tennessee
Porters Falls	WV	26162	E	06/16/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Powhatan	WV	24877	11	12/08/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Primm Springs	TN	38476	E	07/14/1990	Southeast	Tennessee
Provo	SD	57774	C	06/09/1995	Midwest	Dakotas
Quaker Street	NY	12141	E	09/23/1985	Northeast	Albany
Queecreek	PA	15555	E	07/29/1997	Allegheny	Erie
Queen	PA	16670	11	09/30/1993	Allegheny	Erie
Ramsey	WV	25912	C	09/30/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Red Ash	VA	24640	11	08/12/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Redford	TX	79846		01/08/1987	Southwest	San Antonio
Redstar	WV	25914	E	03/17/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Remote	OR	97468		11/30/1990	Western	Portland
Republican Grove	VA	24585	C	09/12/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Richardsville	VA	22736	C	10/18/1993	Mid-Atlantic	N Virginia
Richfield	NE	68054	A	11/21/1989	Midwest	Central Plains
Ridgeway	MI	49275	E	07/23/1994	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Ritter	OR	97872	A	05/05/1989	Western	Portland
Rollin	MI	49278	C	08/29/1997	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Rosburg	NY	14776	E	12/27/1991	Northeast	Western New York
Royalton	WI	54975	D	03/28/1995	Midwest	Milwaukee
Royalty	TX	79779		11/30/1988	Southwest	San Antonio
Rumford Center	ME	04278	11	09/30/1995	Northeast	Maine
Rushville	PA	18839	E	05/18/1995	Allegheny	Harrisburg
Saint Andrews	TN	37372	11	05/04/1992	Southeast	Tennessee
Saint George	ME	04857	11	05/20/1993	Northeast	Maine
Saint Paul	KY	41170	A	10/29/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Salipta	AL	36570	11	09/30/1994	Southeast	Alabama
Salvo	NC	27972	11	10/07/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Sandy	TX	78665	D	10/02/1992	Southwest	San Antonio
Sandy Level	VA	24161	E	10/04/1995	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Sardinia	NY	14134	11	07/31/1995	Northeast	Western New York
Savoy	MA	01256	C	09/22/1989	Northeast	Springfield
Saxon	WV	25180	C	10/04/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Scottville	NC	28672	11	03/05/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Seanor	PA	15953	E	07/27/1990	Allegheny	Erie
Seminole	PA	16253	11	07/05/1994	Allegheny	Erie
Seven Mile Ford	VA	24373	E	12/30/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Severn	VA	23155	11	10/11/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Sharon	WV	25182	11	02/09/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Shattuc	IL	62283	11	10/31/1996	Midwest	Gateway
Shattuckville	MA	01369	C	05/03/1988	Northeast	Springfield
Sherman	WV	26173	C	04/05/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Sidney	IN	46566	E	12/27/1991	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Skygusty	WV	24883	E	03/23/1990	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Slade	KY	40376	E	09/27/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Smith	KY	40867	E	10/01/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana

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Snow Hill	AL	36778	C	01/05/1996	Southeast	Alabama
Solon Mills	IL	60080	E	01/31/1998	Great Lakes	Northern Illinois
Somerset	MI	49281	11	03/16/1996	Great Lakes	Greater Michigan
Soudersburg	PA	17577			Allegheny	Lancaster
South Britain	CT	06487	13	02/03/1994	Northeast	Connecticut
South Rutland	NY	13688	C	10/29/1993	Northeast	Albany
South Shodack	NY	12162	11	02/27/1990	Northeast	Albany
South Waterford	ME	04081	11	09/30/1995	Northeast	Maine
Southside	TN	37171	13	12/05/1991	Southeast	Tennessee
Spalding	ID	83551	C	02/03/1996	Western	Spokane
Speaks	TX	77985	B	02/04/1994	Southwest	San Antonio
Spottswood	VA	24475	E	03/30/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Sprott	AL	36779	11	05/26/1993	Southeast	Alabama
Sproul	PA	16682	E	03/30/1990	Allegheny	Erie
Stacyville	ME	04782	C	06/07/1997	Northeast	Maine
Stafford	OH	43786	C	08/30/1997	Allegheny	Columbus
Standard City	IL	62686	C	10/02/1992	Great Lakes	Central Illinois
Statts Mills	WV	25279	E	12/06/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Steelville	PA	19370	A	04/11/1997	Allegheny	Lancaster
Stinesville	IN	47464	11	10/03/1992	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Stirrat	WV	25645	11	04/01/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Stone	KY	41567	11	05/10/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Stonega	VA	24285	E	02/14/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Strange Creek	WV	26639	11	05/17/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Summerlee	WV	25931	E	04/01/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Swan River	MN	55784	E	12/04/1990	Midwest	Northland
Talbert	KY	41377	A	12/17/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Tariff	WV	25281	C	01/22/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tefft	IN	46380	C	03/01/1997	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Teresita	MO	65573	C	10/03/1990	Midwest	Mid-America
Terry	WV	25934	C	04/08/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Thacker	WV	25694	11	10/27/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Theriot	LA	70397	13	09/01/1989	Southwest	New Orleans
Thurmond	WV	25936	E	01/21/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Todd	PA	16685	C	01/26/1986	Allegheny	Erie
Tomato	AR	72381	A	08/01/1992	Southwest	Arkansas
Torbert	LA	70781	E	12/29/1995	Southwest	New Orleans
Trammel	VA	24289	11	04/03/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Treece	KS	66778	A	01/05/1996	Midwest	Mid-America
True	WV	25988	E	07/23/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tullahassee	OK	74466	E	04/03/1995	Southwest	Oklahoma
Tunnel Hill	IL	62991	A	04/14/1989	Midwest	Gateway
Turin	IA	51059	E	10/04/1996	Midwest	Hawkeye
Twin Branch	WV	24889	11	07/12/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Twist	AR	72385	C	12/21/1985	Southwest	Arkansas
Tylersburg	PA	16361	11	05/18/1996	Allegheny	Erie
Udall	MO	65766	B	04/12/1995	Midwest	Mid-America
Unionport	OH	43966	E	08/14/1992	Allegheny	Akron

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Valley Fork	WV	25283	11	07/11/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Venturia	ND	58489	C	08/02/1996	Midwest	Dakotas
Verda	LA	71481	A	08/16/1996	Southwest	New Orleans
Village	VA	22570	C	10/01/1984	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Viola	ID	83872	E	02/07/1998	Western	Spokane
Volney	VA	24379	D	09/30/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Voss	TX	76888	B	08/31/1988	Southwest	Ft Worth
Vulcan	WV	25697	C	09/30/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wadestown	WV	26589	11	03/04/1994	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Waiteville	WV	24984	E	05/30/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wakenda	MO	64687	C	07/01/1993	Midwest	Mid-America
Walker Springs	AL	36586	11	09/02/1988	Southeast	Alabama
Wardtown	VA	23482	C	03/05/1993	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Watha	NC	28471	13	11/09/1991	Mid-Atlantic	Mid-Carolinas
Watts Bar Dam	TN	37395	11	10/01/1992	Southeast	Tennessee
Wattsville	VA	23483		12/24/1986	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Waves	NC	27982	E	05/30/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Greensboro
Weissert	NE	68880	C	11/28/1997	Midwest	Central Plains
West Chesterfield	MA	01084	E	12/31/1992	Northeast	Springfield
West Hatfield	MA	01038			Northeast	Springfield
West Tremont	ME	04690	11	10/03/1997	Northeast	Maine
West Willow	PA	17583			Allegheny	Lancaster
Westfield	VT	05874	13	09/27/1991	Northeast	Springfield
White Oak	SC	29176	C	10/03/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Columbia
Wilsie	WV	26641	C	07/19/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wingate	MD	21675		06/17/1992	Mid-Atlantic	Baltimore
Wolf Pen	WV	24896	11	01/31/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wonalancet	NH	03897	C	09/01/1992	Northeast	New Hampshire
Woodman	WI	53827	11	06/16/1995	Midwest	Milwaukee
Woodstock Valley	CT	06282	11	11/15/1986	Northeast	Connecticut
Worth	WV	24897	11	07/25/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Worthville	PA	15784	C	02/27/1993	Allegheny	Erie
Yukon	MO	65589	C	11/18/1994	Midwest	Mid-America
Yukon	WV	24899	11	07/21/1997	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Zanoni	VA	23191	C	04/26/1996	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond

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Adrian	OH	44801	C	09/11/1998	Allegheny	Akron
Alco	AR	72610	C	07/03/1998	Southwest	Arkansas
Anabel	MO	63431	E	07/23/1998	Midwest	Gateway
Blissfield	OH	43805	C	09/20/1998	Allegheny	Columbus
Blount	WV	25025	11	10/28/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Blue Jay	WV	25816	11	07/31/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Borderland	WV	25665	11	04/21/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Briar	MO	63931	A	01/15/1999	Midwest	Mid-America
Buford	WY	82052	C	02/01/1999	Western	Denver
Cameron Mills	NY	14820	13	11/14/1998	Northeast	Western New York
Dalton	NY	14836	13	02/02/1999	Northeast	Western New York
Drayton Plains	MI	48330	15	11/15/1998	Great Lakes	Royal Oak
Elsmore	KS	66732	C	12/05/1998	Midwest	Mid-America
Elton	WV	25965	C	07/09/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Elwood	IA	52226	E	03/02/1999	Midwest	Hawkeye
Fort Mitchell	VA	23941	A	08/07/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Gibbonsville	ID	83463	C	04/16/1999	Western	Spokane
Hamilton Dome	WY	82427	A	10/31/1998	Western	Denver
Herrdon	WV	24726	13	01/01/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Isaban	WV	24846	11	05/18/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Killarney	FL	34740	13	08/08/1998	Southeast	Central Florida
Lawrence	IL	62415	E	09/25/1998	Midwest	Gateway
Littleport	IA	52055	C	06/18/1999	Midwest	Hawkeye
Louisville	KS	66450	A	06/05/1998	Midwest	Central Plains
Loveland	OK	73553	B	11/16/1998	Southwest	Oklahoma
Marchand	PA	15758	C	05/30/1998	Allegheny	Erie
McCabe	MT	59245	A	07/19/1998	Western	Billings
Milam	WV	26838	E	12/31/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Mosby	MO	64073	C	08/15/1998	Midwest	Mid-America
Mount Alto	WV	25264	E	09/30/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
North Robinson	OH	44856	11	04/24/1999	Allegheny	Akron
Norwood	MN	55368	15	01/16/1999	Midwest	Northland
Ocean View	NJ	08230	18	08/05/1999	Allegheny	South Jersey
Ogallah	KS	67656	A	04/08/1999	Midwest	Central Plains
Opolis	KS	66760	C	07/02/1999	Midwest	Mid-America
Ora	IN	46968	E	09/05/1998	Great Lakes	Greater Indiana
Peoples	KY	40467	A	01/29/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Pernell	OK	73076	C	07/03/1998	Southwest	Oklahoma
Pine Ridge	KY	41360	E	11/28/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Plainfield	GA	31073	E	08/14/1998	Southeast	Macon
Provo	KY	42267	A	06/19/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Reads Landing	MN	55968	A	06/30/1999	Midwest	Northland
Rumsey	KY	42371	C	08/24/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana
Salosville	OH	43778	E	01/02/1999	Allegheny	Columbus
Savonburg	KS	66772	C	06/06/1998	Midwest	Mid-America
Saxe	VA	23967	13	03/18/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
Selbyville	WV	26236	E	10/30/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Seree	KY	40164	C	08/03/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Kentuckiana

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Shafter	TX	79850	A	02/05/1999	Southwest	San Antonio
Short Creek	OH	43989	C	09/09/1998	Allegheny	Akron
Silerton	TN	38377	C	02/26/1999	Southeast	Tennessee
Spencer	SD	57374	11	06/01/1998	Midwest	Dakotas
Sweet Briar	VA	24595		08/16/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Tibbie	AL	36583	11	03/05/1999	Southeast	Alabama
Torch	OH	45781	C	09/24/1999	Allegheny	Columbus
Twig	MN	55791	11	07/01/1998	Midwest	Northland
Village	AR	71769	A	04/23/1999	Southwest	Arkansas
Water View	VA	23180	C	05/21/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Richmond
West Hartland	CT	06091	E	07/15/1998	Northeast	Connecticut
Wileyville	WV	26186	11	09/11/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Wilsondale	WV	25699	E	03/15/1999	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian
Winterville	ME	04788	C	04/23/1999	Northeast	Maine
Yolyn	WV	25654	11	08/07/1998	Mid-Atlantic	Appalachian

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 556

To amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 5, 1999

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. JEFFORDS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Post Office Community
5 Partnership Act of 1999”.

1 **SEC. 2. GUIDELINES FOR RELOCATION, CLOSING, CONSOLI-**
2 **DATION, OR CONSTRUCTION OF POST OF-**
3 **FICES.**

4 Section 404 of title 39, United States Code, is
5 amended by striking subsection (b) and inserting the fol-
6 lowing:

7 “(b)(1) Before making a determination under sub-
8 section (a)(3) as to the necessity for the relocation, clos-
9 ing, consolidation, or construction of any post office, the
10 Postal Service shall provide adequate notice to persons
11 served by that post office of the intention of the Postal
12 Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct that
13 post office not later than 60 days before the final deter-
14 mination is made to relocate, close, consolidate, or con-
15 struct.

16 “(2)(A) The notification under paragraph (1) shall
17 be in writing, hand delivered or delivered by mail to per-
18 sons served by that post office, and published in 1 or more
19 newspapers of general circulation within the zip codes
20 served by that post office.

21 “(B) The notification under paragraph (1) shall
22 include—

23 “(i) an identification of the relocation, closing,
24 consolidation, or construction of the post office in-
25 volved;

1 “(ii) a summary of the reasons for the reloca-
2 tion, closing, consolidation, or construction;

3 “(iii) the proposed date for the relocation, clos-
4 ing, consolidation, or construction;

5 “(iv) notice of the opportunity of a hearing, if
6 requested; and

7 “(v) notice of the opportunity for public com-
8 ment, including suggestions.

9 “(3) Any person served by the post office that is the
10 subject of a notification under paragraph (1) may offer
11 an alternative relocation, closing, consolidation, or con-
12 struction proposal during the 60-day period beginning on
13 the date on which the notice is provided under paragraph
14 (1).

15 “(4)(A) At the end of the period specified in para-
16 graph (3), the Postal Service shall make a determination
17 under subsection (a)(3). Before making a final determina-
18 tion, the Postal Service shall conduct a hearing, if re-
19 quested by persons served by the post office that is the
20 subject of a notice under paragraph (1). If a hearing is
21 held under this paragraph, the persons served by such post
22 office may present oral or written testimony with respect
23 to the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of
24 the post office.

1 “(B) In making a determination as to whether or not
2 to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office,
3 the Postal Service shall consider—

4 “(i) the extent to which the post office is part
5 of a core downtown business area;

6 “(ii) any potential effect of the relocation, clos-
7 ing, consolidation, or construction on the community
8 served by the post office;

9 “(iii) whether the community served by the post
10 office opposes a relocation, closing, consolidation, or
11 construction;

12 “(iv) any potential effect of the relocation, clos-
13 ing, consolidation, or construction on employees of
14 the Postal Service employed at the post office;

15 “(v) whether the relocation, closing, consolida-
16 tion, or construction of the post office is consistent
17 with the policy of the Government under section
18 101(b) that requires the Postal Service to provide a
19 maximum degree of effective and regular postal serv-
20 ices to rural areas, communities, and small towns in
21 which post offices are not self-sustaining;

22 “(vi) the quantified long-term economic saving
23 to the Postal Service resulting from the relocation,
24 closing, consolidation, or construction;

1 “(vii)(I) the adequacy of the existing post of-
2 fice; and

3 “(II) whether all reasonable alternatives to relo-
4 cation, closing, consolidation, or construction have
5 been explored; and

6 “(viii) any other factor that the Postal Service
7 determines to be necessary for making a determina-
8 tion whether to relocate, close, consolidate, or con-
9 struct that post office.

10 “(C) In making a determination as to whether or not
11 to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office,
12 the Postal Service may not consider compliance with any
13 provision of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of
14 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.).

15 “(5)(A) Any determination of the Postal Service to
16 relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office shall
17 be in writing and shall include the findings of the Postal
18 Service with respect to the considerations required to be
19 made under paragraph (4).

20 “(B) The Postal Service shall respond to all of the
21 alternative proposals described in paragraph (3) in a con-
22 solidated report that includes—

23 “(i) the determination and findings under sub-
24 paragraph (A); and

1 “(ii) each alternative proposal and a response
2 by the Postal Service.

3 “(C) The Postal Service shall make available to the
4 public a copy of the report prepared under subparagraph
5 (B) at the post office that is the subject of the report.

6 “(6)(A) The Postal Service shall take no action to
7 relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office until
8 the applicable date described in subparagraph (B).

9 “(B) The applicable date specified in this subpara-
10 graph is—

11 “(i) if no appeal is made under paragraph (7),
12 the end of the 30-day period specified in that para-
13 graph; or

14 “(ii) if an appeal is made under paragraph (7),
15 the date on which a determination is made by the
16 Commission under paragraph 7(A), but not later
17 than 120 days after the date on which the appeal is
18 made.

19 “(7)(A) A determination of the Postal Service to relo-
20 cate, close, consolidate, or construct any post office may
21 be appealed by any person served by that post office to
22 the Postal Rate Commission during the 30-day period be-
23 ginning on the date on which the report is made available
24 under paragraph (5). The Commission shall review the de-
25 termination on the basis of the record before the Postal

1 Service in the making of the determination. The Commis-
2 sion shall make a determination based on that review not
3 later than 120 days after appeal is made under this para-
4 graph.

5 “(B) The Commission shall set aside any determina-
6 tion, findings, and conclusions of the Postal Service that
7 the Commission finds to be—

8 “(i) arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discre-
9 tion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law;

10 “(ii) without observance of procedure required
11 by law; or

12 “(iii) unsupported by substantial evidence on
13 the record.

14 “(C) The Commission may affirm the determination
15 of the Postal Service that is the subject of an appeal under
16 subparagraph (A) or order that the entire matter that is
17 the subject of that appeal be returned for further consider-
18 ation, but the Commission may not modify the determina-
19 tion of the Postal Service. The Commission may suspend
20 the effectiveness of the determination of the Postal Service
21 until the final disposition of the appeal.

22 “(D) The provisions of sections 556 and 557, and
23 chapter 7 of title 5 shall not apply to any review carried
24 out by the Commission under this paragraph.

1 “(E) A determination made by the Commission shall
2 not be subject to judicial review.

3 “(8) In any case in which a community has in effect
4 procedures to address the relocation, closing, consolida-
5 tion, or construction of buildings in the community, and
6 the public participation requirements of those procedures
7 are more stringent than those provided in this subsection,
8 the Postal Service shall apply those procedures to the relo-
9 cation, closing, consolidation, or construction of a post of-
10 fice in that community in lieu of applying the procedures
11 established in this subsection.

12 “(9) In making a determination to relocate, close,
13 consolidate, or construct any post office, the Postal Serv-
14 ice shall comply with any applicable zoning, planning, or
15 land use laws (including building codes and other related
16 laws of State or local public entities, including any zoning
17 authority with jurisdiction over the area in which the post
18 office is located).

19 “(10) The relocation, closing, consolidation, or con-
20 struction of any post office under this subsection shall be
21 conducted in accordance with the National Historic Pres-
22 ervation Act (16 U.S.C. 470h-2).

23 “(11) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed
24 to apply to a temporary customer service facility to be

1 used by the Postal Service for a period of less than 60
2 days.

3 “(12)(A) For purposes of this paragraph the term
4 ‘emergency’ means any occurrence that forces an imme-
5 diate relocation from an existing facility, including natural
6 disasters, fire, health and safety factors, and lease termi-
7 nations.

8 “(B) If the Postmaster General makes a determina-
9 tion that an emergency exists relating to a post office, the
10 Postmaster General may suspend the application of the
11 provisions of this subsection for a period not to exceed
12 180 days with respect to such post office.

13 “(C) The Postmaster General may exercise the sus-
14 pension authority under subparagraph (A) once with re-
15 spect to a single emergency for any specific post office.”.

The Postal Service adopts the following amendment to U.S. Title 39 CFR Part 241.

Part 241-[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 241 continues to read as follows:
Authority: 39 U.S.C. 401.
2. Effective October 5, 1998, 39 CFR part 241 is amended by revising § 241.4, to read as follows:

§ 241.4 Expansion, relocation, and construction of post offices.

(a) Application.

- (1) This section applies when the USPS contemplates any one of the following projects with respect to a customer service facility: expansion, relocation to another existing building, or new construction, except when the project is to meet an emergency requirement or for temporary use. Emergency situations include, but are not limited to, earthquakes, floods, fire, lease terminations, safety factors, environmental causes, or any other actions that would force an immediate relocation from an existing facility. Temporary relocation of space is used or, but not limited to, holidays, special events, or for overflow business. Use of emergency and temporary space will be limited to 180 days in duration. Any additional incremental time periods of up to 180 days each must be approved by the Vice President, Facilities.
- (2) This section does not apply when the project under consideration is limited to repair and alterations, such as-
 - (i) Painting;
 - (ii) Repairs;
 - (iii) Replacement or upgrade of structural or functional elements of a postal building or its equipment;
 - (iv) Paving, striping, or other repair of parking areas;
 - (v) Landscaping.

(b) Purpose.

The purpose of the procedures required by this section is to assure increased opportunities for members of the communities who may be affected by certain USPS facility projects along with local officials, to

convey their views concerning the contemplated project and have them considered prior to any final decision to expand, relocate to another existing building, or construct a new building that is owned or leased.

(c) Expansion, relocation, new construction.

When a need is identified that will require the expansion, relocation, or new construction of a customer service facility, postal representatives responsible for the project will take the following steps in accordance with the time schedule shown:

- (1) Personally visit one or more of the highest ranking local public officials (generally individuals holding elective office). During the visit, the postal representatives will-
 - (i) Identify the need and fully describe the project that is under consideration to meet it, explain the process by which the Postal Service will solicit and consider input from the affected community, and solicit a working partnership with the community officials for the success of the project.
 - (ii) Emphasize that in meeting a need for increased space, the first priority is to expand the existing facility; the second priority is to find an existing building in the same area as the current facility; and the third option is to build on a new site; all within the downtown area, if possible.
 - (iii) Ask that the Postal Service presentation of the project be placed on the regular agenda of a public meeting or hearing. If no such meeting is planned within the next 60 days or the agenda of a planned meeting cannot accommodate the project, the USPS will schedule its own public hearing concerning the project, and will advertise the meeting or hearing in a local general circulation newspaper.
 - (iv) Give the local officials a letter describing the intended project.
- (2) Notify the lessor of the affected facility of the project, in writing.
- (3) Send an initial news release to local communications media.

(4)

(i) Post in the public lobby of the affected post offices a copy of the letter given to local officials, or the news release, or, space permitting, both. If such information is available at the time, include in the posting a public notice of the date, time, and location of a public meeting or hearing at least 7 days prior to the meeting or hearing.

(ii) Except as provided in this paragraph, attend, or conduct, one or more public hearings to describe the project to the community, invite questions, solicit written comment, and describe the process by which community input will be considered. If it is believed at the time that the existing facility is not able to be expanded or that expansion is impracticable, disclose that fact and the reasons supporting that belief. If, during the public meeting or hearing process, a new development should occur to allow for an expansion of the existing facility, the Postal Service will make a good faith effort in pursuing this alternative. Under exceptional circumstances that would prevent postal representatives from attending a public meeting or conducting a postal hearing on the planned project within a reasonable time, and subject to approval of the Vice President, Facilities, the Postal Service may distribute a notification card to all affected customers, seeking their comments or other feedback. An example of exceptional circumstances would be a project in a sparsely populated area remote from the seat of local government or any forum where a postal conducted meeting could be held.

(iii) At any public meeting or hearing, advise local officials and the community of their appeal rights and the process by which an appeal can be made. Information provided must include time limitations and an address for the appeal.

(5) Review comments and notify local officials of decision. Not less than 15 days after the date of the most recent public meeting, or after receipt of notification cards, make a decision that takes into account community input and is consistent with postal objectives (e.g., expansion, relocation to another building, or construction of a newly

owned or leased facility), and notify local officials in writing. This notification must include information on the availability and terms of review under paragraph (c)(6) of this section. At the same time, post a copy of the notification letter in the local post office for the community. Take no action on the decision for at least 30 days following notification of local officials and the community.

(6) Within the time period identified in paragraph (c)(5) of this section, any person may request in writing that the decision be reviewed by the Vice President, Facilities, at Postal Service Headquarters. No particular format is required for requesting review, but the request must be in writing and identify the post office or location affected; and should identify the decision objected to, and state the reasons for the objection. The Vice President, Facilities, will obtain the views of the decision maker, review relevant parts of the project file, and if necessary request more information from the appellant. Upon review of the facts, the Facilities Vice President, or a representative, will issue a written determination, if possible, within 15 days. In no event will the Postal Service take action on the decision being reviewed until 15 days following issuance of the final review determination. If the determination on review is to set aside the decision, the project process will return to the public hearing stage of paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(7) Advertise for sites and existing buildings, in accordance with existing postal procedures.

(d) Discontinuance of post offices; historic preservation.

(1) It is the policy of the Postal Service, by virtue of Board of Governors Resolution No. 82-7, to comply with Section 106 of the general provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act 16 U.S.C. 470, et seq., Executive Order 12072, and Executive Order 13006. Therefore, any facility project that will have an effect on cultural resources will be undertaken in accordance with that policy.

(2) Any action involving the closing or other discontinuance of a post office shall be undertaken only in accordance with 39 U.S.C. 404(b) and 39 CFR 243.1. In the event a facility action is subject to both this section, and either the NHPA or the post office discontinuance requirements, all comment periods and other public participation matters shall be governed by those statutes.

(e) Site selection.

- (1) When the decision is to advertise for sites and existing buildings, and after such sites have been identified, advise local officials in writing of all contending sites, and with respect to all sites not selected, provide an explanation. This notice will advise local officials, and the community, that no decision to select a site will be made for a minimum of 30 days, and that comments or discussions of all sites are solicited. Post a copy of this letter in the lobby of the affected post office for public notice.
- (2) Once a specific site is then selected, notify local officials in writing of the selection decision.
- (3) Take no final action to acquire or lease the selected site for 30 days following the notification in paragraph (e)(2) of this section.

(f) Planning, zoning, building codes.

In carrying out customer service facilities projects, it is the policy of the Postal Service to comply with local planning and zoning requirements and building codes consistent with prudent business practices and unique postal requirements. In order to promote a partnership with local officials and assure conformance with local building codes, plans and drawings will be sent to the appropriate building department or other officials for review. Where payment of fees is normally required of private entities, the Postal Service will pay a reasonable fee for the review. The Postal Service will give local public officials written notice of any timely, written objections or recommendations that it does not plan to adopt or implement.

(g) Continuing communication.

During construction, whether renovation or new construction, the postmaster should keep local officials and the community informed via letters and news releases. The postmaster and other postal officials should plan, conduct and invite the community and local officials to any "grand opening," as appropriate.

WILLIAM J. HENDERSON
POSTMASTER GENERAL, CEO



October 6, 1999

Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, Subcommittee on International
Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6250

Dear Chairman Cochran:

In preparation for Thursday's hearing, I am writing to provide you with our views on S. 556, "The Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999." These thoughts apply equally to H.R. 670, an identical bill sponsored by Representative Earl Blumenauer.

Some time ago, the Postal Service, with the input of Congress, decided that it needed to do a better job of working with local citizens and elected officials to replace or refurbish post offices. We made many trips to Capitol Hill to discuss with you and your staffs the best way we could fix the process. As a result, the Postal Service has made major policy changes to correct the imbalances that existed. On May 7, 1998, we put interim regulations into effect and published them in the *Federal Register* for public comment. On September 2, 1998, we published the final regulations, which took effect on October 5, 1998.

The new regulations are written in plain English and spelled out in our Community Relations Handbook. They emphasize our preference to expand current facilities instead of relocating them. They provide more time in the process to increase community participation. They add the requirement for a public meeting—above and beyond the required meetings with local officials. For the first time, they also create a community appeal procedure that ensures the direct involvement and oversight of our Vice President of Facilities in the final decision when necessary.

The new regulations have been in effect for one year and applied to thousands of facility projects. Community reactions have been favorable. So far, we have received less than 30 appeals. Overall, the new regulations are working well and we are committed to their continued success.

The Postal Service is concerned, however, that legislation harmful to our facility program remains under consideration despite our remedy. Our main concern is that the legislation seeks to use the same process for opening a new post office that is used for closing an old one. Closures generally occur in areas of declining population. When you have an eroding customer base, it makes sense to look at ways to provide service in a more cost-effective way. However, when this involves a closing, the local community may feel an acute sense of loss that has nothing to do with service.

It is a fact of life that the Postal Service and universal mail delivery and access are a binding force in our society. That is our mandate by law. So the appearance that these bonds are breaking can have a strong emotional impact on a community. It is precisely for this reason that we have imposed a moratorium on post office closings.

475 L ENRIANI PLAZA SW
WASHINGTON DC 20260-0010
202-268-2500
FAX 202-268-4860

For the same reason, Congress has made the current process to close a post office both lengthy and involved. It is appropriate to slow down the highly emotional closing process. Yes, it has increased costs to the Postal Service, but in light of the very small number of offices that have come under these procedures in a given year, the costs have not been excessive. And the benefit has been significant. It has given the community every opportunity to make their case, express their feelings, and adjust to change. And in the end, it has provided for a final appeal to the Postal Rate Commission, which has then had a clear, if nonetheless difficult choice, between two well-defined options.

Construction and relocation projects are at the other end of the spectrum. They represent new investments in growth areas and are designed to improve the service customers already receive. These enhancements may include better parking and handicapped access, larger lobbies with more conveniences, or more workroom for our employees to provide superior customer service.

As with buying a new house, however, delay works against you in construction and real estate. Everything is contingent on timing—interest rates, contracts, commitments. The longer the delay, the less likely the deal, and costs skyrocket. Furthermore, facility decisions are complex, based on competing priorities, funding, site availability, growth projections, community input, and numerous other variables. They are also marked by numerous special interests. Every lessor, site owner, developer, builder, and competitor has self-interest. Under the proposed legislation, any one of these individuals—even a single customer—could delay an entire project simply by filing an appeal. This step would effectively take the decision out of the community's hands and turn it over to a federal body in Washington.

When it comes to modernizing our facilities, red tape and delay are serious concerns. It is a constant challenge to keep our facilities up-to-date. As more and more Americans have begun moving to rural communities and warmer climates, once sleepy towns have awakened virtually overnight, forcing us to expand or build new post offices. The doubling of mail volume over the past two decades has compounded this need. This year, total volume will top 200 billion pieces for the first time. When you factor in the number of repairs, renovations, and lease actions that come with managing more than 37,000 buildings, it is easy to see why we have our hands full, orchestrating thousands of real estate projects each year.

The Postal Service is concerned that the legislative proposal before you would have serious ramifications for our real estate program and our ability to serve the nation. Employees in cramped and aging facilities would suffer. The Postal Service would find it difficult to respond to serious health and safety issues in a timely fashion as dictated by prudence and required by law. Customers would wait for, or lose, needed service improvements. Our ability to address population growth and new business development would be impaired.

The Postal Service has listened to its customers and the Congress. We have responded with new regulations and a new attitude that are delivering positive results for all. Rather than imposing a legislative remedy that would have far-reaching implications, we ask that our revised facility regulations be given ample time to prove that they work.

We appreciate the time and energy you have devoted to this issue and look forward to the sharing our views in more detail on October 7.

Sincerely,


William J. Henderson

Government Relations



THE IMPACT OF S. 556 & H.R. 670 ON THE POSTAL SERVICE, CITIZENS, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

This legislation would delay much-needed facility projects for months on end.

S. 556/H.R. 670 would create serious delays in the Postal Service's facility program by prescribing a cumbersome appeals process and lengthy community review and comment periods. As shown in the attached timeline, this legislation would cause as much as a 14-month wait before the Postal Service could even begin moving forward to expand, relocate, construct, or renovate a post office.

The legislation takes the deliberately slow and methodical appeals process for post office closings, which takes an average of two years to complete, and applies it to virtually every postal facility action. This change would require the Postal Service to begin every facility project by building a substantive record that could withstand the intense scrutiny of the Postal Rate Commission (PRC). Based on our experience with closings, it would take two or three months just to fulfill this requirement.

The appeals process itself would cause at least five months of delay. Once the case has been built and community input secured, customers would have 30 days to file an appeal and the PRC would have four months to review it. If the PRC remands our proposal, the appeals process could be repeated over and over as we select new building sites that just one person opposes.

The delays caused by this legislation would impose a hardship on our employees, who would have to continue working in aging, cramped facilities. They also would impair the overall level of service we provide to the nation. Customers would be forced to endure longer lobby waits and limited parking. The introduction of automated technologies, additional post office boxes, and design features that improve both customer service and processing operations would also be delayed.

An entire community could be penalized to satisfy the whim of a single individual.

One individual who disagrees with the Postal Service's proposal to move, construct, or expand a postal facility could begin many months of intense review simply by filing an appeal with the Postal Rate Commission. But those who file an appeal may not have the best interests of the community at heart. For example, lessors who do not want the Postal Service to move, developers or business owners who want to protect their commercial interests, and customers who simply don't want a longer trip to the post office could all tie up the process with an appeal.

It is impossible to please everyone. City and downtown merchants often have differing views from the residents who do not live, work, or shop downtown and want the post office closer to their homes and workplaces. By giving one person the ability to contest a proposal, the legislation would invite extensive delays and heighten the anxiety and frustration of town officials and citizens over their postal facilities. It could also cause a post office project—even one that is strongly supported by the community—to be overturned by a minority of one.

A price tag of \$50 million a year would mean higher postage rates for America.

Through a variety of provisions, this legislation would generate at least \$50 million a year in new costs that would be passed on to the American people in the form of higher postage rates. These expenses would not be paid by local communities, but by the ratepayers whose revenues fund the postal system.

This legislation would require the Postal Service to mail a letter outlining its proposal to relocate, expand, close, renovate, or build a new facility to each and every customer served by that facility. This provision alone would cost ratepayers approximately \$27 million a year in mailing costs and another \$10 million in printing and addressing expenses. The extra paperwork and reporting requirements in the legislation would also force the Postal Service to hire about 200 additional employees, at a cost of approximately \$10 million each year.

Other costs that are more difficult to quantify would also be created. For example, to justify certain socio-economic factors required in the legislation, the Postal Service would need to hire private consultants for analysis and reporting. In addition, the cost of delay could be significant, reducing revenues by impairing service and encouraging customers to use alternatives.

A unique and unfair regulatory burden would be imposed on the Postal Service.

S. 556/H.R. 670 impose facility regulations and requirements that go well beyond those faced by any other federal or private establishment. No other organization in America, either public or private, is forced to go through the maze of regulations envisioned in this legislation when moving, expanding, renovating, or building a facility. What other organization must notify every customer it serves by mail when it simply wishes to undertake a facility project? What other organization is forced to let one dissatisfied customer or building lessor hold up a project for months? What other organization has another federal body ultimately directing its facilities program? What other organization must abide by even more stringent facility procedures put in place by local communities? While post offices do play a pivotal role in local communities, this legislation would impose upon the Postal Service a disproportionate regulatory burden that is unique in all of government and business.

Small post offices would not benefit from this legislation.

Supporters of this legislation believe that it will cause fewer small post offices to be closed. This is highly unlikely. This legislation would barely change the already rigorous process for closing post offices. Customers would continue to have ample opportunity for input and the right to appeal decisions to the PRC. The Postal Service's moratorium on closings also makes the impact of this legislation on small post offices negligible.

An entire nation would be penalized because a few isolated facility issues.

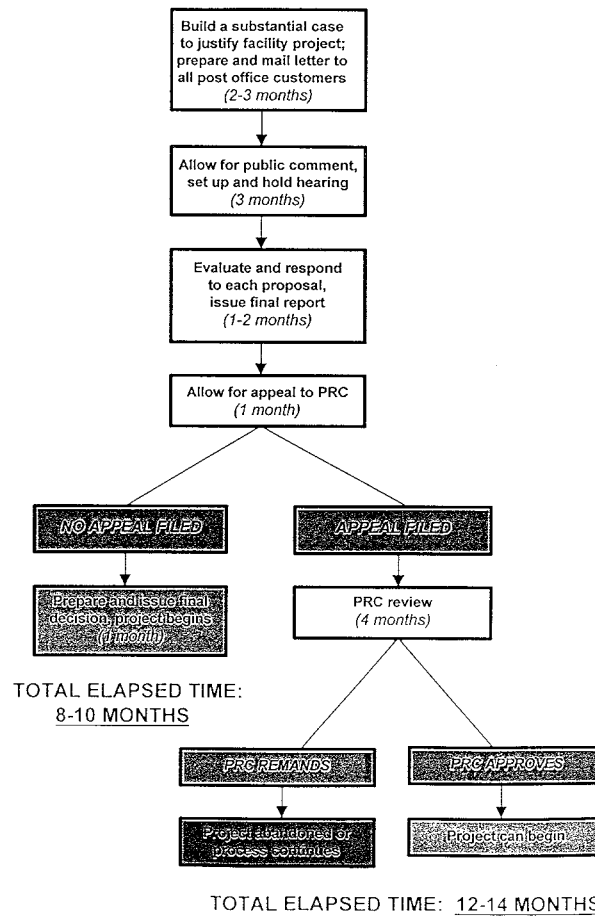
A vast majority of the more than 25,000 facility actions taken by the Postal Service each year are worked out successfully with local communities. We estimate that less than 1 percent of our facility projects generate complaints, and these situations are becoming fewer and fewer as the Postal Service's recently revised facility regulations take hold. In addition, the problem examples given by the supporters of the legislation are dated (in some cases, as much as 10 to 15 years old), and the facts are frequently distorted by the media and others. Simply put, this legislation is overkill. It will create more problems than it is designed to solve. Instead of taking this excessive, highly regulatory approach, let us allow the Postal Service's more reasonable new community guidelines to work for America.

Government Relations



Timeline of a Postal Service Facility Project under S. 556/H.R. 670

Steps that must be taken before action on a facility can even begin



Statement of Senator Carl Levin
October 7, 1999
Governmental Affairs Subcommittee Hearing on
Guidelines for the Relocation, Closing, Consolidation or Construction of Post Offices

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased you are holding a hearing today on S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999. As Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will testify today, this is an important “smart growth” bill. This is because it focuses on a basic thing the federal government can do to keep our city centers vibrant rather than drained by sprawling development at the edges of town. **The federal government can locate its buildings in downtowns.** By making every effort to be responsive to communities and locate its facilities in downtowns, the United States Postal Service in particular can make an important contribution to keeping these centers healthy and alive.

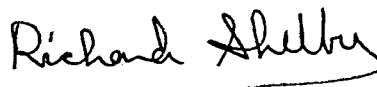
As co chairman of the Senate Smart Growth Task Force, I am a cosponsor of this bill. The Task Force’s other co-chairman, Senator Jeffords, who will testify today, is also a cosponsor and a strong advocate of this bill. We recognize the location of federal buildings is an important smart growth issue and I am pleased this bill is drawing attention to the issue.

We all know how towns and cities struggle to keep their main streets and centers alive and economically healthy. When a post office moves from these centers to the strip malls at the outskirts of town because there is more open space to expand into or more parking spaces directly adjacent to their facility, it makes this struggle for affected communities all the more difficult.

In my state of Michigan I am working with a number of communities that are trying to convince the U.S. Postal Service to find a way to retain their operations in their city centers. For example, in Grand Ledge, Michigan, the present post office is in the central business district and has limited customer parking, although there is plenty of city owned parking within a block. One possibility is for the Postal Service to select a site with more adjacent parking spaces and that would require a site criteria of over 2 acres, making retaining the post office in the downtown difficult. I would hope the U.S. Postal Service would be flexible and consider the availability of other parking in nearby lots. If the U.S. Postal Service would do this as a rule, it would make downtown locations more possible.

Another example is Cadillac, Michigan, which has been added to the U.S. Postal Service's critical list for relocation. In order to retain a downtown post office location, the City of Cadillac has repeatedly offered to work with the Postal Service in identifying a downtown location which would service its needs. I hope the Post Service will try to accommodate the community's desire to retain the downtown location. This should even include the possibility of retaining its retail operations in the city-center even if it has to move its distribution center.

The bottom line is that the U.S. Postal Service should be flexible and responsive to the citizens of the communities it serves. As an important anchor to many of our nation's downtowns, the U.S. Postal Service should take this role seriously. There are ways the Postal Service can meet its goals and still accommodate the desires of the citizens that it serves. And as a responsible partner in communities across America, every effort should be made by the Postal Service not to pull up the anchor that might sink the ship of downtowns often struggling to stay afloat.



Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services
Statement for the Record
Senator Richard Shelby
October 7, 1999

I would like to thank the Chairman, my colleague from Mississippi, Senator Cochran for holding this hearing and allowing me to testify regarding this important subject.

Mr. Chairman, in Alabama, and across this Nation, millions of Americans rely on the Postal Service for their mail delivery. I know that the Committee recognizes the importance of the role that the Postal Service plays in providing universal service to everyone, everywhere. Modern postal facility infrastructure is key to providing such service.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that S.556, the Postal Community Partnership Act, may compromise the Postal Service's ability to continue to perform its functions well. Unfortunately, S.556 is based on the misconceived notion that the Service ignores the concerns and interests of local communities in its decision making process regarding the location of new facilities. This premise is flat out wrong. The Postal Service makes a great effort to involve local communities in the facility movement process. In fact, last year the Service promulgated community movement regulations which mandate community involvement in the process. So far, these regulations have worked very well.

I have heard that many folks are concerned that the Postal Service does not play proper attention to the needs of "downtown" areas -- that the Service prefers suburban locations to downtown ones, thereby allowing the decay of downtown facilities. Mr. Chairman, my own experience with the Postal Service regarding the fate of a facility located in downtown Selma, Alabama confirms to me just the opposite -- the Service works with local communities and protects downtown and inner city postal locations.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that S. 556 would create a system that unnecessarily involves Washington politics in the facilities location decision making and appeals process. It has been my experience that the Postal Service involves local communities and best knows how to use their limited resources to deliver service to all Americans. We should allow them to continue to do so.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to express my views.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POSTAL SUPERVISORS

National Headquarters
1727 KING STREET, SUITE 400
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314-2753
(703) 836-8660

October 7, 1999

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Subcommittee on International Security,
Proliferation and Federal Services
United States Senate
SH-442
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am taking this opportunity on behalf of the National Association of Postal Supervisors to express our opposition to S. 556, the Post Office Community Partnership Act. The bill would establish new guidelines -- above and beyond those already established by the U.S. Postal Service -- for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices.

As you know, NAPS represents the interests of over 36,000 active and retired postal supervisors and managers employed by the U.S. Postal Service. Our mission as a management association is both to improve the working conditions of our members and to improve operations within the Postal Service. We are opposed to S. 556 because it would harm, not improve, Postal Service operations and the management flexibility necessary to assure that Americans receive world-class postal service.

The U.S. Postal Service owns or uses over 37,000 facilities throughout the country. As one of the nation's largest owners and managers of real estate, it completed more than 20,000 repair and alteration projects and built 800 new or replacement facilities last year alone.

The Postal Service places the highest priority on responsive and respectful relationships with the thousands of neighborhoods and communities in which it

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maintains post offices throughout the nation. Informed and mutually supportive relationships between the Postal Service and its customer base are critical to the goal of universal service.

We regard S. 556 as unnecessary and over-reaching, given the existing framework of current Postal Service rules that adequately require Postal Service dialogue and interaction with affected communities over the relocation, closing, consolidation or construction of post offices. When the Postal Service considers the relocation of an existing post office, the Postal Service requires of itself a process that seeks to inform the public of the options under consideration and invites public comment. Under current rules, Postal Service officials at the beginning of the process, before any decisions have been made, meet with local officials to discuss postal office facility needs and to seek community participation. The regulations even permit internal appeal of Postal Service relocation decisions by dissatisfied citizens.

In addition, when replacement facilities are planned, the Postal Service undertakes a process that provides for public input in a reasonable and responsible manner. All affected customers are individually notified in writing of the relocation proposal. The Postal Service participates in or hosts a public hearing to discuss the project. Projects must be publicized in the local newspaper and notices must be mailed to all residents and businesses served by the post office. Postal customers must receive at least 45 days notice before the postal Service solicits for a new site, and local municipal officials are contacted prior to that date. Public meetings are conducted when requested or otherwise are needed to explain and seek comments. The Postal Service recognizes the value of this interactive and deliberative planning process with the communities it serves. At times this has resulted in the revision of its plans to arrive at solutions more acceptable to the local community. While no process is perfect, the Postal Service has assiduously worked to improve its partnership with local communities in engaging community input at the front-end of decision-making processes to open, close or move its post offices.

In contrast, S. 556 proposes that the Postal Service secure public hold a community meeting only if asked. This is far less community involvement and interaction than the Postal Service already provides. Appeal by any dissatisfied citizen to the Postal Rate Commission of a Postal Service decision to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, as proposed by S. 556, will cause considerable delay and hamstring the management flexibility of the Postal Service, particularly in post office relocations or new construction, where acquisition or control of a new site is involved.

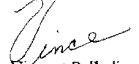
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The Postal Service needs to retain and preserve an adequate measure of responsible management discretion and judgment in improving service in areas with outdated facilities that cannot be expanded or modernized. Many local officials are justifiably concerned that the relocation of an older, existing facility from a downtown area to another site may be detrimental to the integrity of the surrounding downtown community. The Postal Service needs to continue to work with communities as a responsible citizen in finding win-win solutions. At the same time, the Postal Service continues to face the business challenge – as a of serving the American people in the most effective ways possible at the lowest cost with service of the highest quality.

In this respect, the Postal Service needs to have the capability to respond to deteriorating facilities requiring upgrade and modernization. Yet S. 556 would specifically prohibit the Postal Service from relocating or consolidating a facility in order to comply with OSHA or correct a safety problem that ensures a safe environment for its employees and customers. In addition, it would require compliance with all local zoning and building codes to an extent far greater than is reasonably necessary. While the Postal Service has sought to voluntarily comply with most local zoning and building codes, it has exercised its discretion in extraordinary circumstances to respond to zoning or building requirements that would impose undue hardships. Quite reasonably, that latitude of management discretion needs to be preserved.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the National Association of Postal Supervisors opposes S. 556, but will continue to promote and support efforts by the Postal Service to provide and improve its efforts to solicit and consider community feedback in Postal Service decision-making processes in connection with the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of its post offices. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Postal Service in those endeavors. Thank you for your Subcommittee's consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Vincent Palladino
President